FIRST THINGS

THE LOVE OF SAINT THÉRÈSE
Philip Zaleski

ORWELL FOR CHRISTIANS
Paul J. Griffiths

CHRISTOPHER LASCH AND THE LIMITS OF HOPE
Patrick J. Deneen

William L. Saunders, Jr. *Embryology: Inconvenient Facts*
Peter J. Leithart *The Politics of Gratitude*
BOOKS : *Gregory Wolfe* • *James R. Stoner, Jr.*
David Vincent Meconi • *Edward T. Oakes*

The Public Square ***Richard John Neuhaus***
IN THIS ISSUE: *Internationalisms*

December 2004 • Number 148 • $4.25/$5.25 Canada

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

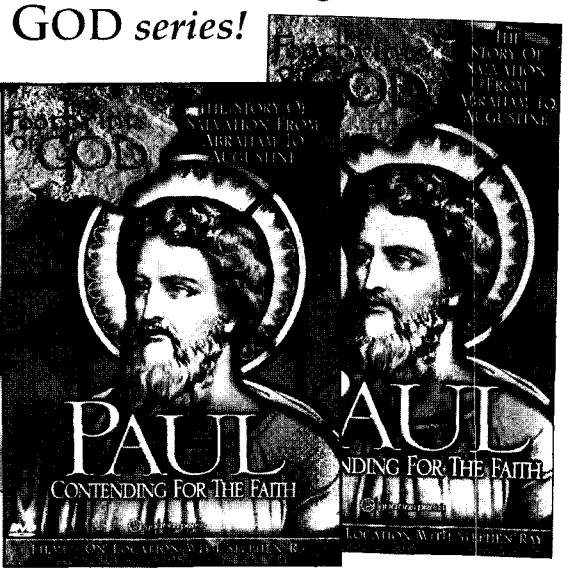
BRING THE "SALVATION STORY" INTO YOUR HOME!

The Latest in the Award-Winning
FOOTPRINTS OF GOD *series!*

PAUL

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

Introducing the most original and dynamic video series in Catholic Church history! *The Footprints Of God: The Story Of Salvation From Abraham to Augustine* will take you on a journey of discovery through the sweeping saga of salvation. In this exciting 10-volume series, you'll meet the key people and places of Scripture and Church history as they come to life in a fresh and powerful way!



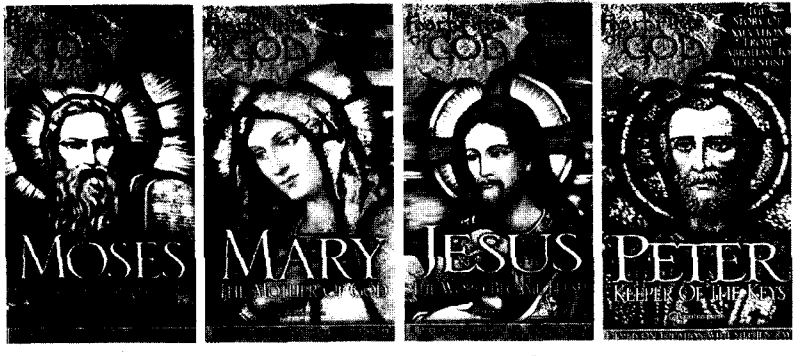
Zealous for the God of Israel, Saul of Tarsus pursued murderous threats against the disciples of Jesus. But Saul's zeal was turned upside down when he was knocked from his "high horse" and humbled by the hand of God. Join the adventure as **Stephen Ray**, best-selling author and popular Bible teacher, takes you on the road with St. Paul through Israel, Syria, Turkey, Greece and Italy. Fall from a horse in the desert and dangle over the Damascus Wall in a basket. Cling to driftwood in the sea and stride along ancient Roman roads. You'll better understand the life, ministry, and sufferings of Paul the Apostle. *Comprehensive study guide included.*

Color, 120 minutes, * DVD, FOGPA-M, $29.95
Color, 90 minutes, VHS, FOGPA-V, $24.95

– PAUL DVD FEATURES –
English/Spanish subtitles • Behind the Scenes • Bloopers
Interview with Roy Schoeman,
author of *Salvation is From the Jews*

MOSES: WINNER 2003
Telly Award • Aurora Award • Unity Awards
JESUS: WINNER 2004
Telly Award - Best Religious Video

NOW AVAILABLE



MOSES: Signs, Sacraments, Salvation
— Moses DVD Features —
English/Spanish subtitles • Behind the Scenes • Bloopers
Interview with Rosalind Moss, Jewish convert and apologist
FOGMO-V... 75 min., $24.95 FOGMO-M DVD ... 105 min.,$29.95

MARY: The Mother of God
— Mary DVD Features —
English/Spanish subtitles • Behind the Scenes • Bloopers
Interviews with Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn
FOGMA-V . . . 75 minutes, $24.95 FOGMA-M DVD ... 105 min.,$29.95

JESUS: The Word Became Flesh
— Jesus DVD Features —
English/Spanish subtitles • Behind the Scenes • Bloopers
Interview with Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J., host of EWTN Live
FOGJ-V... 90 min, $24.95 FOGJ-M DVD ... 120 min., $29.95

PETER: Keeper of the Keys
— Peter DVD Features —
English/Spanish subtitles • Behind the Scenes • Bloopers
Interviews with Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn
FOGPE-V . . . 70 minutes, $24.95 FOGPE-M DVD ... 100 min.,$29.95

For more info, go to www.FootprintsOfGod.com!

ignatius press
P.O. BOX 1339, FT. COLLINS, CO 80522
1-800-651-1531 • WWW.IGNATIUS.COM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

December 2004 • Number 148

Correspondence

2 Just punishment?; the end of care; what's beyond politics; the ethics of communion; amity or animus?; Hebrew Catholics?; a Catholic Islam

Opinion

William L. Saunders, Jr. 13 Embryology: Inconvenient Facts
Peter J. Leithart 15 The Politics of Gratitude

Articles

Philip Zaleski 18 The Love of Saint Thérèse
Patrick J. Deneen 26 Christopher Lasch and the Limits of Hope
Paul J. Griffiths 32 Orwell for Christians

Books

Gregory Wolfe 41 Father Joe by Tony Hendra
James R. Stoner, Jr. 46 The People Themselves by Larry D. Kramer
David Vincent Meconi 50 Lord Jesus Christ by Larry Hurtado
Edward T. Oakes 52 John Wesley by Stephen Tomkins
58 Briefly Noted

The Public Square

Richard John Neuhaus 64 Internationalisms, *etc.*

Poetry

Oliver Thomas (31)

First Things (ISSN #1047-5141) is published monthly (except for combined issues June/July and August/September) for $34 per year ($14.97 for students) by the Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: send address changes to First Things, P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Editorial Offices:** The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. **Editorial Phone:** (212) 627-1985. **Email:** ft@firstthings.com. **Website:** http://www.firstthings.com. **Advertising Offices:** 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, IL 61108. **Advertising Phone:** (815) 398-8569. **Email:** firstthingsadsales@pma-inc.net. **Subscription Department:** P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Subscription Phone:** 1-877-905-9920. **Email:** frth@kable.com. Unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. Newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Rt. 250, Milan, OH 44846. Copyright © 2004 by the Institute on Religion and Public Life. All rights reserved. Produced in the USA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

FIRST THINGS is published by Religion and Public Life, an interreligious, nonpartisan research and education institute whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society.

Editor-in-Chief: *Richard John Neuhaus*
Editor: *Damon Linker*
Associate Editor: *J. A. Gray*
Managing Editor: *Matthew Boudway*
Editorial Assistant: *Erik Ross*
Poetry Editor: *Joseph Bottum*
Publisher: *Institute on Religion and Public Life*
Publishing Service:
Publishing Management Associates

EDITORIAL BOARD

Midge Decter
Timothy George
Mary Ann Glendon
Wilfred M. McClay
David Novak
Michael Novak
George Weigel

EDITORIAL
ADVISORY BOARD

Hadley Arkes
Stephen M. Barr
James Burtchaell
David Dalin
Thomas Derr
Jean Bethke Elshtain
Elizabeth Fox-Genovese
Suzanne Garment
Robert George
Russell Hittinger
Leonid Kishkovsky
Glenn Loury
George Marsden
Robert Louis Wilken

CORRESPONDENCE

Just Punishment?

In "Capital Punishment: The Case for Justice" (August/September), J. Budziszewski makes a strong argument for capital punishment based on justice in accord with Scripture. However, I think that in focusing on justice and clemency rather than on signs or sacramentality he focuses on the wrong issue. What we need to ask is: What does capital punishment say sacramentally? That is, what is the deeper, supernatural reality that God wants us to understand when He prescribes the outward sign of capital punishment for certain crimes? What is God teaching us?

Although Professor Budziszewski refers to murder as categorically deserving capital punishment, he fails to mention fornication, adultery, sacrilege, etc. Would he advocate that we put to death categorically all fornicators as the Mosaic law prescribed? What about politicians who make sacrilegious communions? Such a position would be consistent with his use of Scripture.

God shows mercy to David after he commits adultery and murder. He is more deserving of death than an ordinary murderer since he used the power received by his anointing as king to accomplish his crimes. But God knew his heart and the powerful lesson he would teach us. This was more important than "justice."

Prof. Budziszewski focuses on the justice of retribution. Let's face reality here: for certain crimes, no punishment will ever do justice in this life. How can you restore lost innocence to a child who has been defiled? How do you restore lost life to someone murdered?

Capital punishment can teach that one deserves eternal death for certain acts, but only in the context of a society's religious belief. In an irreligious society, capital punishment teaches something else: that the state has absolute power over life.

By contrast, doing away with capital punishment teaches that life is sacred. It teaches that only God can say when life ought to begin and when it ought to end. And it teaches that true justice is only achieved in eternity.

(The Rev.) John R. Waiss
Tilden Study Center
Los Angeles, California

The strength of J. Budziszewski's argument for the primacy of retribution in punishment is that it provides for proportionality between the gravity of offenses committed and the severity of punishments imposed. When persons or their relatives are seriously and intentionally harmed, they have a prima facie claim that substantial punishment should be imposed. However, Budziszewski has not established his claims that capital punishment is consistent with the New Testament and that retributive justice requires that society retain it.

Professor Budziszewski maintains that "at least death deserves death, [and] that nothing less is sufficient to answer the gravity of the deed." He reasons that through the application of deserved punishment the wrongdoer pays a price equivalent to the harm he has done and society is protected morally by the restoration of just order. But it is far from evident that to punish the crime of homicide with death is the most just punishment or is just at all. Advancing a principle of proportional retribution does not in itself reveal the justice of any specific punishment. The punishment for homicide could, for example, be exile, life in prison, life with hard labor, peri-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

odic torture without death, torture followed by death, or death by humane means. Prof. Budziszewski asserts that "[S]ome criminals seem to deserve death many times over." Later in his piece he refers to "the deviant who tortures small children to death for his pleasure" and "the ideologue who meditates the demise of innocent thousands for the sake of the greater terror." We may ask: Why should such persons not be subject to torture?

An answer may be found in Prof. Budziszewski's rejection of those "grotesque and torturous methods of execution" that, he says, "seem most likely to deter." He rejects them because "they are incompatible with human dignity." But this is a criterion other than retributive justice. Moreover, Prof. Budziszewski further mitigates the requirement that "death deserves death" by appealing to God's forgiveness and patience and to Christ's having taken the punishment of those "who repent and turn to him." Thus he reasons that not only criminals in general but "perhaps capital criminals" can "be punished less than they deserve." Then, in the final adjustment of his position, Prof. Budziszewski ends his article by agreeing with Pope John Paul II that in our time "cases in which the death penalty is still necessary are 'very rare, if not practically nonexistent.'"

This is an enormous leap, for the bulk of Prof. Budziszewski's arguments aim to refute opponents of capital punishment. Why seek to defeat anti–death penalty arguments if one ends by concluding that the death penalty should be practically abolished? If human dignity and mercy are significant enough to rule out "torturous methods" and greatly reduce the occasions for capital punishment, why not conclude that they should rule out these intentional killings by government entirely?

Prof. Budziszewski rightly says that it "is a fearsome matter to imprison a man." But if there was an error, the imprisoned person can be released and restored to family and friends, whereas the person executed cannot be brought back to life. Along with feeding the hungry, taking in the stranger, and clothing the naked, ministering to the prisoner is specified as an action taken by "the just" (Matthew 5:34-40). While prison may be in tension with the gospel norm of forgiveness, executions decisively violate it.

The idea that God puts "the divine prerogative of life and death" into the hands of "those who hold public authority" has done great harm. Capital punishment has been a blot on human history, including the history of ostensibly Christian societies. Reasons for Christians to oppose it include pervasive injustices in its application and, most importantly, the fact that it violates norms of love and forgiveness.

Michael C. Stratford
Emeritus Professor
of Political Science
Central Michigan University
Mount Pleasant, Michigan

J. Budziszewski's argument rests on the asserted but unargued proposition that the crime of murder "deserves" death and only death. Nothing less, apparently, will do, since Professor Budziszewski formulates his central question as follows: "is it ever permissible for public authority to give the wrongdoer less than he deserves?" This frames the conversation from the start in terms of an either/or—*either* murderers are given death, *or* they are given less than they deserve, i.e., they are extended "clemency." To abolish the death penalty would be to "*categorically* extend clemency" to *all* those who otherwise deserve death.

Framing the issue this way guarantees the author the moral high ground, since to defend the abolition of the death penalty would be to defend a measure of punishment that misses the mark of justice. Prof. Budziszewski writes as though his position is traditional, but it is actually very rare. He defends a strict application of the *lex talionis* (law of retribution)—that is, he holds to equality both in proportion and in kind of harm inflicted. This is the position of Kant.

It is not, however, the position of Thomas Aquinas, whose defense of the death penalty dominated Catholic penal ideas for seven hundred years. Aquinas argued that punishment should proportionally correspond to the fault. Civil authority should punish grave crimes with severe punishments and the gravest crimes with society's most severe punishments. As to which concrete punishments should be annexed to which crimes, the judgment is a prudential one left for public authority to determine. If punishment is to be made capital, a further consideration needs to be taken into account. Aquinas argues for the death penalty by way of analogy (an analogy which in my estimation fails): a dangerous criminal can be likened to a diseased limb of the body; just as it can be good and life-giving to cut off a diseased limb for the sake of the health of the whole body, so too it can be good and salubrious to kill a dangerous criminal for the sake of the welfare of the community.

As stated, I think Aquinas' analogy is flawed, but at least it makes ample room for the conventional interpretation of the papal teaching that in the modern world the welfare of the community no longer requires the death of criminals; severe but nonlethal punishments therefore should be inflicted upon murderers with confidence that justice is thereby being served. If Prof. Budziszewski wishes to argue for a strict interpretation of the *lex talionis*, then he should argue for it and not presume it. Citing Genesis 9:5-6 as a proof text is not a sufficient argument. The problem of applying Old Testament

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

penal principles to the order established by Jesus Christ in the New Covenant is complicated and at least deserves an argument. After all, death is considered "deserved" for more than twenty offenses in the Pentateuch, including for working on the Sabbath (Exodus 31:12-14; 35:2), disobeying a priest (Deuteronomy 17:12), rebelling against one's parents (Deuteronmy 21:18–21), and letting one's ox gore more than once (Exodus 21:29).

E. Christian Brugger
Institute for the
Psychological Sciences
Arlington, Virginia

I focus solely upon those parts of J. Budziszewski's article that rely upon the Pentateuch as scriptural authority for the use of capital punishment by society against murderers. The article did not cite the plethora of other offenses for which Scripture had prescribed capital punishment. They include violence against or cursing of parents (Exodus 21:15; 21:17; Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18-21); desecration of the Sabbath (Exodus 23:12; 34:21; Leviticus 19:3; 26:2; Numbers 15:32-36; Deuteronomy 5:12-15); sorcery (Exodus 22:17; Leviticus 20:27); blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16); adultery (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22-23); incest (Leviticus 20:11-14); sodomy (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13); rape (Deuteronomy 22:25); apostasy (Deuteronomy 13:2-16); and bearing false witness (Deuteronomy 19:16-21).

It is uncertain whether Professor Budziszewski favors the prescribed use of capital punishment for these other offenses, and if yes, what philosophical justification he may offer for such use of capital punishment. A review of Jewish jurisprudential history would reveal that capital punishment was rarely, if ever, practiced by the Jewish Sanhedrin (i.e., the supreme judicial authority), notwithstanding the many scriptural mandates for its use. Although provisions for capital punishment were never formally excised from Scripture, such provisions were, in practice, rendered nugatory by means of procedural and evidentiary impediments and by strictly circumscribed judicial interpretations.

In understanding the U.S. Constitution, one must first review all relevant cases of the U.S. Supreme Court (and, when necessary, of lower courts as well) that have applied and construed the appropriate provisions of the Constitution. A bare review of the literal text will not lead to a correct understanding of the Constitution. So, too, an accurate understanding of capital punishment as prescribed in the Pentateuch requires a thorough review of the entire body of rabbinic jurisprudence as developed over the millennia.

Whatever the merits of the analysis offered in the article, such merit is not properly based on the sole citation of Genesis 9:5-6.

Benjamin D. Sherman
Saddle Brook, New Jersey

The death penalty is a topic about which I have some knowledge. I was an assistant public defender in Alameda County, California from 1969 to 1989, and I served as the public defender for that county from 1989 to 1999. I have defended death penalty cases at the trial level and supervised the defense of many others.

J. Budziszewski's article is a cogent refutation of one key element in the conventional wisdom about the death penalty—the belief that Christian doctrine can never condone capital punishment for murder. Professor Budziszewski reminds us that established Christian tradition recognizes justice in the classic Torah-based model and favors individuated mercy, not blanket clemency. In effect, he argues that indiscriminate clemency for murderers perverts both justice and mercy.

With many ethical realists, I accept both the objective reality of morality and the need to make it realistically operative. I believe that moral knowledge is embedded in the warp and woof of reality by the One who created all that is, but I still recognize the need for incentives and disincentives, as well as public authority, to actualize moral knowledge. Moral behavior in the day-to-day world is distributed along a crude bell curve of probity, with the sociopaths and naturally enlightened occupying the respective edges, and the rest of us populating the middle. Even the most self-evident moral principles are generally not self-executing. Most people are governed most of the time by a combination of moral inclination, moral training (currently in decline in our culture), and the classic fear of negative consequences (punishment, which is now weakened by moral relativism). Without such consequences civilized life is doomed. For this reason, ethical realists know that the death penalty is a crucially necessary component of any system of justice.

I'm well aware of the psychological and budgetary costs of administering the death penalty. But surely the costs of murder are even higher. We should never be willing to sacrifice the lives of innocent murder victims on the altar of an ideology or theology that assigns an unreasonably high value to the lives of convicted killers.

Jay B. Gaskill
Alameda, California

J. Budziszewski's article was very interesting, but also very flawed. The first problem flows from the author's decision to cite the Torah. Professor Budziszewski states that the Torah requires blood for blood. This is absolutely true. But so what? The Torah also requires the execution of any male who violates any stipulation of the Decalogue. In the case of idolatry the sanction was "to the third and fourth generation." This means

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the idolater's family, at least the males, were to be executed through four generations. Today even Orthodox Jews do not follow all the stipulations of the Torah. Why should we follow any of them? To say that this is what Christian theologians have traditionally done does not justify the practice. St. Paul said that if you take on any part of the Torah you are bound by all of it. The second flaw in Prof. Budziszewski's argument is that he clearly thinks that one's life is one's own possession. I would argue that we are mere stewards of our lives. When a murderer kills someone, he is taking what belongs to God, not what belongs to the victim. When the state takes a life in punishment, it is taking what belongs to God and not to the criminal.

Paul A. Hottinger
Downers Grove, Illinois

I can find only two points with which to quibble in J. Budziszewski's argument in favor of capital punishment. First, Professor Budziszewski fails adequately to address the tension that exists in the Christian religion between mercy and justice. Reading him, one would think that mercy and justice operate as equally triumphant entities, never conversing or interacting at all. But this idea is contradicted by the Scriptures. The obvious example can be found in the story of the adulterous woman, where mercy effects a dramatic reversal of justice. In this event, public authority applies the law found in the Torah and does so, we have to believe, justly. Jesus, for his part, does not say that the woman does not deserve death. Rather, he says he "will not condemn [her]" (John 8:11). Prof. Budziszewski's assertion, "justice is inexorable; evil must be punished," seems at least weakened by this account, considering that, in this instance, justice yields to mercy, and evil is not punished. The second point worth making concerns an omission. Prof. Budziszewski does not address the reality that not every law revealed by God is enforced by the state. Heresy, for example, is a crime, yet it is not one that governments these days tend to recognize (for obvious reasons). But a state's failure to acknowledge a crime does not lessen its gravity.

Kevin Rulo
St. Louis, Missouri

J. Budziszewski replies:
Jay Gaskill's insights as a former public defender are helpful. Needless to say, I agree with him that indiscriminate clemency perverts mercy as well as justice. I also agree that the debate about capital punishment should not be driven by the question of whether it is more or less expensive than the alternatives. The issues before us are moral, not budgetary.

I can't help noticing a strong Marcionite streak in several of the letters—a strange aversion to the idea that the God who spoke to the Patriarchs, disclosed Himself in Jesus Christ, and taught through the Apostles is the same God. They would have me say that we have nothing to learn from the Old Testament, and that the teachings of St. Paul didn't even apply to his own society, much less to ours. Among the many problems with this view is that it leaves us with a very strange Jesus—a Jesus who didn't mean it when he said that Scripture cannot be broken and that he had come not to destroy the law but to fulfill it.

John Waiss asks the right question: What deeper reality is God trying to teach by prescribing capital punishment as the punishment for certain crimes? In the case of murder—the only crime I addressed—surely there can be no doubt, because He answers the question Himself. That is why I quoted Genesis 9:6: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image." The deeper reality is that man is made in God's image. It is not *despite* our being images of God but *because* we are images of God that murder deserves death. This would seem to be clear.

But here another problem arises. Some of my critics seem to have read only a few paragraphs of my article before tossing it aside in outrage. Budziszewski quotes Genesis 9:6—how outrageous! He must disbelieve in mercy and want all murderers put to death! If only Pastor Waiss had read further, he would have discovered that I discussed the relationship of justice and mercy at length. I even agree with him about some things. In light of scriptural teaching concerning mercy, for example, it would have been harsh and unreasonable had I taken Genesis 9:6 as implying that deserved punishment may never be remitted. But of course that is not how I took it. My point was that the punishment is *deserved*.

This fact has consequences for how we should think about capital punishment. Among other things, it tells us that pardon is not owed to the murderer as a matter of justice, for from that point of view he ought to be put to death. Rather, pardon is an exercise of that mercy which tempers justice, and the grounds for pardon must be weighed case by case. Put another way, the problem lies with categorical pardon, not pardon as such. I gladly affirm John Paul II's teaching that capital punishment is to be employed only rarely. What I oppose is the entirely different notion that capital punishment is wrong in principle. By awarding as a right what is properly given as a gift, this attitude debases not only justice but mercy itself.

Although Pastor Waiss—along with Benjamin Sherman, Paul Hottinger, and Kevin Rulo—reproaches me with the many capital offenses in the Law of Moses, the Genesis 9:6 precept long predates the revelation through Moses at Sinai. It is not just another piece of Hebrew civil legis-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lation that no longer applies to us; indeed, it is not a piece of Hebrew civil legislation at all. Consider these three points. First, God announces the 9:6 precept to Noah and his "sons" or descendants, which means—as rabbinical tradition has always acknowledged—not a particular nation or religious community, but the entire human race. Second, the reason given for the precept is the unchanging fact that man is made in God's image. If it is true that man is the *imago Dei* in every age, then what this entails is also true in every age. Third, the 9:6 precept is reaffirmed in the New Testament by St. Paul, who says that the magistrate "does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer."

Pastor Waiss claims that St. Paul's teaching applies only to societies whose government and people believe as we do, who acknowledge the true God. Does it? In that case we must wonder why Paul applied it to his own society. The people and government of the Roman world were at least as pagan as the people of ours. They are commonly reputed to have been more so.

Professor Stratford and Dr. Brugger observe that, strictly speaking, proportionality does not mean that murder deserves a punishment of death; what it means is that murder deserves a punishment proportional to the crime. Yes, of course. But concretely speaking, is any punishment besides death proportional to the crime of deliberately and wantonly taking innocent human life? Of the various alternatives that Professor Stratford considers, some, like lifelong imprisonment, fall beneath the proportion, while others, like lifelong periodic torture, exceed it. All of them—except perhaps exile, which seems rather hard on the people to whose lands the murderer is exiled—lack that symbolic equivalence by which capital punishment is able to express the significance of what the murderer has done.

If desert were the *only* consideration in punishment, this would be the end of the matter. There would be no occasion for prudential deliberation. Because that is not my view, I discussed the ways in which the secondary purposes of punishment should enter into prudential deliberation about pardon in individual cases. But prudence cannot justify *categorical* pardon, because prudence must consider each case in all of its particularity.

A difficulty with Prof. Stratford's letter is that he sees inconsistencies in both Scripture and papal teaching where I do not—and so, of course, he sees inconsistencies in my response to them. St. Paul says the magistrate does not bear the sword in vain, and Jesus says we should visit the souls in prison. Why may I not insist on both of these doctrines? The Holy Father says that capital punishment is legitimate in principle, and also that under present circumstances it should be rare. Why may I not emphasize both sides of his teaching? I understand that Professor Stratford likes some of these ideas and dislikes others, but how does that make them inconsistent?

He accuses me of another kind of inconsistency, too. I object to torture—one of the alternatives to capital punishment that he suggests—on grounds that torture violates human dignity. By doing so, he complains, I introduce another idea into the argument alongside desert. So I do, but allowing only one idea into an argument is his rule, not mine, and it seems to me a silly one. Desert concerns the meaning of justice; human dignity constrains the manner in which justice is to be done. Both considerations draw their force from the fact that we are made in the image of God. They are not at war. They are both true.

Paul Hottinger's claim that I consider human beings the owners rather than the stewards of their lives is absurd. He gives no reason for this offhand judgment, it has no basis in what I wrote, and it is the opposite of what I believe. I find it difficult to believe that he was reading the article that I wrote.

Mr. Rulo remarks that not everything in the divine law given to the Hebrew people was meant to be enforced by our own temporal law. This point is quite true, and I have discussed it in numerous writings about natural law—but nothing in my article contradicts it.

Like several of my other critics, Mr. Rulo also thinks I deny that justice and mercy can converse with one another. I close by saying once again how astonished I am that any careful reader could have overlooked the fact that I insist upon their converse and discuss it at length. Here is what I actually wrote: "Justice is inexorable; evil must be punished. This would seem to make mercy impossible; yet there is mercy. As the Psalmist says, 'Great is thy mercy, O Lord; give me life according to thy justice.' Somehow the irreconcilables meet and kiss."

Meeting and kissing—that sure looks like converse to me. Unfortunately, my critics want mercy to kiss the way that Judas did. I beg to disagree. Mercy should temper justice, not betray it.

The End of Care

I compliment Gilbert Meilaender for his careful and systematic comments concerning Robert D. Orr's position in "Ethics & Life's Ending: An Exchange" (August/September). Some argue that the intention of a physician who withdraws a feeding tube is not to kill but rather to decrease suffering, cease a useless therapy, and allow a disease to progress naturally. My reply has been to quote the succinct statement of Justice Scalia in his dissent in *Cruzan*:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

since the withdrawal of food and water is always fatal, and since a patient in a persistent vegetative state (PVS) will not die *but for* such withdrawal, it is hard to imagine any other intention than "to make Nancy [Cruzan] dead." Every physician has had the experience of discontinuing some form of treatment thought to be lifesaving after he found that it was not. In such cases, the possibly burdensome interventions may become optional. The provision of food and water is simply not one of those interventions.

The Court in *Cruzan* assumed without proof that feeding and hydration were medical therapy rather than normative care. This assumption has been treated as "black letter law" since *Cruzan*, and thus is actually the most important aspect of that decision. While I believe this conclusion is a classic example of result-driven jurisprudence, it is not determinative of what is or is not "useless" or "excessively burdensome" therapy. Often discussed under the rubric of "futility," feeding and hydration in a PVS patient are only "futile" if the goal is a return to normal or near-normal cognition. It is never useless in maintaining life.

Pondering Alzheimer's Disease in this context should send up red flags to anyone familiar with current medical practice. The recent conference sponsored by the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations entitled "Sustaining Treatments and the Vegetative State: Scientific and Ethical Dilemmas" correctly concluded that the diagnosis of PVS is subject to widespread abuse and misunderstanding inside the medical profession. In my experience and that of others, patients in the final stage of Alzheimer's are often said to have PVS in order to invoke the legal protections of various state statutes that permit the withdrawal of food and water for PVS but not for other conditions. This has created a "diagnosis creep," sweeping increasing numbers of vulnerable patients into the nontreatment category.

Furthermore, patients with advanced Alzheimer's do not always receive full, careful, and detailed care, including adequate feeding and hydration, even when a feeding tube is in place. This occurs because caregivers assume that death is near and anything other than comfort-related treatment is futile. These practices can and do lead to fatal medical error, creating a self-justifying hypothesis that feeding tubes do not prolong life in Alzheimer's patients.

My greatest fear is that medical practice and social mores have outrun legal and ethical theory, thus making these discussions moot. Have we become the Netherlands while we slept?

Curtis E. Harris
Ada, Oklahoma

The exchange between Robert D. Orr and Gilbert Meilaender raises many important issues. But there are several others that call for attention. One of them is the fascination of Americans with living wills. Medical decisions stemming from living wills often coerce family members to cooperate in evil actions similar to assisted suicide. These actions ought not to be allowed.

A second issue is the importance of honoring death with dignity, which we too often fail to do. No one should be allowed to die in a manner that is painful, sterile, or solitary. In today's medical world, with hospice and other forms of qualified medical care, killing the patient instead of the pain is not necessary. Consistent with this, doctors should not be guilty of therapeutic obstinacy in keeping patients alive long past a proportionate level of care.

Lastly, there is the importance of recognizing and praising medical heroism. Even in cases where death is a foregone conclusion or disease is in its final stage there remains a nobility in the actions of medical personnel who stay awake nights performing one last resuscitation, counseling the grieving family that they will do all they can, and collaboratively suffering at the bedside with the incurable patient.

Besides affirming a passion for the value of each individual life, such medical heroism stimulates society to greater compassion. The dying never lose their capacity to be loved, and the spiritual enhancement I have seen in these dying individuals when lovingly cared for by family and health professionals is inspiring. The sterile intellectualization of proportionate or disproportionate measures, ordinary or extraordinary means, withdrawing versus withholding, should not trump the value of love.

Aristotle states that courage does what is to be praised. Young people want heroes—those who save lives, fight for lives, mourn for lives. It is no wonder that we see a different kind of individual pursuing a medical career these days; the cynicism of assisted suicide, abortion, and euthanasia has allowed "the smoke of Satan" to distort medicine's true calling. Instead of hairsplitting, health care needs the impassioned and unflinching affirmation of life.

John O'Keeffe
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Robert D. Orr replies:

In my essay, I supported the shift in terminology from "ordinary versus extraordinary measures" to the use of the concept of proportionality as an effort to "weigh the burdens and benefits of a particular treatment for a particular patient." Gilbert Meilaender believes this newer terminology is imprecise because, he claims, there is no objective way to weigh burdens and benefits. I agree that making this calculus is a value-laden choice. Professor Meilaender prefers the terms "usefulness" and "burdensomeness." These terms also require

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a value judgment. I do not see the advantage of using them instead of proportionality, but I do see a clear advantage of both over the older terms based on standards of "ordinariness" that seem to apply to the treatment measure itself rather than to the judgment about use of the treatment in a given situation.

We cannot make a value judgment about usefulness without asking: Useful for what? What is the goal of the treatment? I would suggest that the goal of using a feeding tube in a person who is unresponsive after resuscitation from a near-drowning event is to give the body time to heal—to see if the person's awareness will return. After weeks or months of observation with no sign of improvement, the feeding tube is no longer useful since that goal is not achievable. If, on the other hand, the goal of the feeding tube is to prolong the person's life until another life-threatening illness intervenes, then it is indeed useful. If that choice is made, other choices will be inevitable: whether to use antibiotics for a potentially reversible infection; whether to use cardiopulmonary resuscitation to try to reverse a cardiac arrest; whether to use dialysis for kidney failure; whether to do a heart transplant for irreversible heart failure; etc. In all of these conditions the patient may live several more years if the treatment is successful. Using Prof. Meilaender's criteria, these treatments would be obligatory because they are at least potentially useful and they would not be burdensome to the person in a PVS, who lacks awareness.

Though he does not explicitly exclude it, Prof. Meilaender seems not to include the burden to others in his value judgment. I understand his reluctance. I get very nervous when I hear physicians or philosophers make the utilitarian argument that a given patient's life need not be preserved because it places an excessive burden on others. However, the frightening result of some utilitarian reasoning does not negate the consideration of consequences in other moral dilemmas. This calculation was clearly permissible using the older ordinary-extraordinary distinction that Prof. Meilaender prefers, since cost was viewed as an acceptable criterion of decision-making, and excessive cost could render a particular treatment extraordinary.

My conclusion: when a feeding tube in a person confirmed to be in a PVS will not achieve its intended purpose, it may be assessed by some families to exert a significant emotional or financial burden on them; thus its continued use is optional. I have not said that the individual's life is useless or worthless as Prof. Meilaender infers. Each life has inherent and eternal worth because of the *imago Dei*, regardless of its utility to others. Many Christians decry any discussion of quality of life, believing it is trumped by sanctity of life in all situations. However, God's commandment of stewardship requires some discretion in the application of technology and allows us to assess quality of life in our determination of the proportionality decisions we make regarding the use or nonuse of specific medical treatments. Serious, selfless, and prayerful discernment is needed.

I support and commend John O'Keeffe's plea for compassionate and courageous care at the end of life. However, I am not convinced that praise of "medical heroism" is always warranted. I often counsel against "one last resuscitation" when "death is a foregone conclusion," and offer instead the "collaborative suffering" at the bedside, which he also says he supports.

Curtis E. Harris and I agree that continued use of a feeding tube in a PVS patient is futile if the goal is returned cognition and that it is not futile if the goal is maintaining life. We disagree on whether the latter is obligatory or optional.

Gilbert Meilaender replies:
I am happy to return the compliment to Curtis E. Harris. He makes his case with succinctness and precision. Moreover, the "diagnosis creep" that he fears seems to me to be a legitimate concern, always in need of our attention. John O'Keeffe is, I think, correct to suggest that living wills—a purely procedural solution to a difficult problem—may sometimes countenance substantive injustice. They are not the answer people once supposed they might be. With some of Mr. O'Keeffe's other claims I am less ready to agree. In part, he simply leaves me puzzled, since I'm not sure how it is that he wishes to condemn "therapeutic obstinacy" while praising the "medical heroism" that performs "one last resuscitation." Indeed, I suspect that what he calls "hairsplitting" I call "careful moral reasoning"—which is, I would say, one of the tasks of anyone who seeks to love not only with heart, soul, and strength, but also with the mind.

Insofar as Robert Orr returns to our earlier exchange, rather than to our correspondents, I can see little that clarifies the difficulties or goes beyond the defects I found in his original essay.

What's Beyond Politics

The critical attention FIRST THINGS has recently accorded to my book *Democracy and Tradition* is welcome, but I cannot resist responding to Richard John Neuhaus' charge that my attitude toward American democracy is idolatrous ("Religion and Democracy: A Necessary Tension," Public Square, June/July). I am indeed committed to, and grateful for, both democratic institutions and the tradition of democratic discussion and reflection. But neither, in my view, is worthy of worship, and neither is the object of my ultimate concern. American democracy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is not my religion. As I write in the book, "I am not recommending that we become *preoccupied* with our identities as members of a civic nation. In my view, this is merely one important concern among others. Indeed, a life lived solely or even largely as an expression of this concern would hold no attraction for me." At another point I explicitly warn against "idolatry" directed toward the people. At yet another, I argue that "democracy involves substantive normative commitments, but does not presume to settle in advance the ranking of our highest values. Nor does it claim to save humanity from sin and death. . . . Cooperating democratic citizens tend also to be individuals who care about matters higher than politics."

Gilbert Meilaender's review of my book ("Talking Democracy," April) takes a line similar to Father Neuhaus'. Professor Meilaender's argument depends on the significance he attributes to one of my epigraphs, in which Dewey claims that democracy "is a form of government only because it is a form of moral and spiritual association." I chose the epigraph to highlight a conception of democracy as an ethically substantive form of life, in which citizens relate to each other as moral beings. Democracy is not, in my view, merely a formal, procedural affair. It involves honoring one another as loci of responsibility and spiritual aspiration. That makes it "a form of moral and spiritual association," but it does not make it a religion.

What, then, about Fr. Neuhaus' claim that I "view religion instrumentally, and approve of it to the extent that it serves democracy"? As a non-Christian, I do take an interest in Christian commitments in part because of their political effects. That Fr. Neuhaus and I, like most readers of this journal, are interested in the political effects of Muslim commitments does not entail that we view Islamic religion merely instrumentally. My book does not counsel readers to believe whatever they like as long as it serves democracy. Rather, it explores the possibility that their various sincerely held religious convictions might unite citizens of good will in the struggle for justice and peace. My immanent criticism of distinguished Christian thinkers is intended to show them respect as the particular people they are. It is incompatible with the manipulative attitude implicit in an instrumental view of religion.

A Christian friend from whom I sought advice on a draft of this letter pointed out to me that many believers might find it hard to imagine that a nonbeliever could see anything more than instrumental value in a religious tradition. While I cannot honestly confess faith in a personal God, I suspect that I read Thomas Aquinas, for example, with roughly the same attitude that my friend does: acknowledging the intrinsic value of what Aquinas teaches me about the pursuit of excellence, the depth of human fault, and the mysteries of existence, while also reflecting critically on his claims in light of the rest of what I care about and believe. Aquinas read Maimonides, Avicenna, and Aristotle in the same spirit. As Alasdair MacIntyre says, Aquinas' way of reading them is one of the things he has to teach us.

The third part of my book begins by pointing out that liberals and traditionalists "have gotten rather good at . . . making their opponents seem despicable or foolish. But neither side has had much success at explaining the other side's strengths." For this reason, I have tried to read Stanley Hauerwas and MacIntyre—as well as John Rawls and Richard Rorty—in the hope of learning things from them that cannot be learned (or learned equally well) elsewhere. I have been richly rewarded, because reading them has led me to change my mind on important questions. My "democratic traditionalism" owes as much to religious traditionalists as it does to secular democrats. I prefer to see both groups as conversation partners with much to teach me.

Professor Meilaender ends his review by suggesting that I have overextended the image of conversation by using it to characterize political life as such—a move that, in his view, is not just philosophically mistaken but bad for democracy. What I actually wrote, however, is this: "Conversation is a good name for what is needed at those points where people employing different final vocabularies reach a momentary impasse. . . . The political discourse of a pluralistic democracy, as it turns out, needs to be a mixture of normal discourse and conversational improvisation. In the discussion of some issues, straightforward argument on the basis of commonly held standards carries us only so far. Beyond that, we must be either silent or conversational."

If I considered conversation a good image for the political as such, why would I contrast it with *normal* political discourse? It will of course be a rare instance of political speech that transcends an impasse in the way that Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address transcended the divisions of the Civil War. But it would hardly be bad for democracy in the age of the culture wars if a few political leaders and public intellectuals tried to follow his example.

Jeffrey L. Stout
Professor of Religion
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

The Ethics of Communion

In "Communion & *Communio*" (Public Square, August/September) Richard John Neuhaus goes wobbly. Although he does not mention Bishop Michael Sheridan of Colorado Springs by name, that's obvi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ously who Father Neuhaus had in mind when he described as "problematic" the position that not only pro-abortion politicians but also anyone who votes for a pro-abortion candidate should refrain from communion. I have long admired Fr. Neuhaus' courage, articulateness, common sense, and above all his vibrant Catholic faith. On this matter, however, Fr. Neuhaus has strayed from the moral principle that a possible good end cannot be justified by an immoral means.

Contra Fr. Neuhaus and Senator Rick Santorum, I would suggest that knowingly voting for a pro-abortion senator when there is an opportunity to vote for a pro-life alternative is a moral evil. A possible retention of Senate control, and a possible advancement of pro-life legislation, does not excuse the moral evil. The end does not justify the means.

I regret that it is necessary to give an incredibly far-fetched example to illustrate the moral nonsense of Fr. Neuhaus' position. Assume an incumbent United States senator was thoroughly pro-life and yet also supported the rounding up and killing of ten percent of the blacks in Georgia. And assume that the senator in question said that he knew his views on killing blacks had little or no chance of ever coming to pass. Could one morally vote for such a senator under these circumstances? No Catholic, or reasonable person, knowing that senator's views, could morally vote for such a person simply because it would advance pro-life legislation.

Does the Cardinal Ratzinger "loophole" in his June 2004 letter to Cardinal McCarrick, which would permit one to vote for a pro-abortion politician for reasons other than said politician's being pro-abortion, justify Fr. Neuhaus' position? If it does, then someone will have to explain very carefully to me why Andrew Greeley is wrong in saying Catholics can vote for John Kerry. Right now, I am convinced that both Fr. Neuhaus and Fr. Greeley have egregiously misapplied the "Ratzinger loophole," though for substantially different reasons and motives. If abortion is a moral evil, then no one can knowingly support or vote for a candidate who is pro-abortion. This is the simple truth, and the sooner we act upon it the better. I applaud Bishop Sheridan's courage and common sense in this regard. I am afraid that the nuancing by Fr. Neuhaus and Senator Santorum is too Kerry-like.

John E. Archibold
Denver, Colorado

In "Communion & *Communio*," Richard John Neuhaus characterizes the statement "anyone who votes for a pro-abortion politician should refrain from communion" as "highly problematic." I respectfully disagree.

It is necessary to distinguish between formal and material cooperation. In the former case, the act itself is morally evil. It is never permissible. The author of a pornographic article is a formal cooperator. A truck driver who delivers pornographic material to newsstands is a material cooperator. His act may be morally licit, because of its remote connection with erotic abuse and his own economic need. Love for others does not override the duty to love oneself.

If a person knowingly and willingly gives his vote to a pro-abortion candidate, he is formally cooperating in an objective moral evil—the advancement of the pro-abortion agenda. Father Neuhaus suggests that it was correct for political personages to support pro-choice Senator Arlen Specter "in order to maintain control of the Senate and the possibility of advancing pro-life legislation." To the contrary, I would maintain that no vague, future benefits provide sufficient reason to vote for a pro-choice candidate. In my estimation, the act of voting for such a politician is itself morally wrong, because it is formal cooperation, albeit remote, in the intrinsically evil act of abortion.

Kenneth F. Slattery, C.M.
St. John's University
New York, New York

RJN replies:
Regarding John E. Archibold's letter: the end can justify the means, but it cannot justify any means; it cannot justify evil means. Voting is a means instrumental to effecting political ends. Christians are morally obliged to act toward the political end of legally protecting unborn human life, a duty reinforced by ecclesial authority for Catholic Christians. That end has moral priority over any other end in political dispute. (A truth underscored by Cardinal Ratzinger, who, by the way, does not deal in "loopholes.") By no plausible argument can a vote for John Kerry be construed as a means to the end of protecting unborn children. Senator Kerry and his supporters do not even attempt to make an argument to the contrary. In fact, they are insistent that the unborn should not be legally protected and that Kerry will make sure they are not. In the case of the Pennsylvania primary, anti-abortion politicians George W. Bush and Rick Santorum believed that a vote for Arlen Specter was a means to several ends, including the protection of unborn children. One could in good conscience agree or disagree with that prudential judgment. Voting is a means to an end. Voting is not a confessional statement.

I believe Kenneth F. Slattery would be correct if a person voted for Senator Specter in order to support his pro-abortion purposes. In the case cited, however, one is voting for Specter precisely in order to frustrate his pro-abortion purposes. We may dispute the political tactic, but the moral distinction is sufficiently clear.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Amity or Animus?

Two instances do not constitute a pattern, and it may be that I have simply run into unusually bad luck, but it is disconcerting that both critiques to which I have been subjected in FIRST THINGS during the last year or so have grievously misrepresented what I wrote. First, my book on Lubavitch messianism was savagely attacked by David Singer for an argument that it did not make ("The Rebbe, the Messiah, and the Heresy Hunter," May 2003), and now Richard John Neuhaus, in a more moderate piece ("Anti-Semitism and False Alarms," Public Square, August/September), compresses several significant distortions of my *Commentary* article on *The Passion of the Christ* into the space of a few paragraphs.

Father Neuhaus writes that I "deplore Christian literalists who defend the film as being faithful to history and the gospel texts, as well as Orthodox Jews who defend such literalism and the film more generally." This sentence clearly gives the impression that I criticize literalists for their literalism. Precisely the opposite is true. My article repeatedly and uncompromisingly defended the right of literalists to their literalism and vigorously criticized Jews and others who denied that right. I expressed satisfaction that my own Orthodox community is sensitive to the concerns of fundamentalist Christians on this score. It was only after adducing detailed evidence that the film is in significant measure patently unfaithful to the Gospels that I criticized literalists and their Jewish supporters who falsely affirm its fidelity.

Fr. Neuhaus goes on to write that "Berger . . . is exercised that the film does not abide by guidelines issued by the Catholic bishops conference for presenting the passion, although he knows full well that the bishops did not sponsor and had no control over the film. Berger expresses sympathy for the judgment of another Jewish critic who said, 'The solid bridge of trust Jews had with the Catholic Church now lies exposed as merely a drawbridge, readily placed in raised position when it is most needed.' Perhaps Berger fails to appreciate that Catholics viewed the film in order to witness and enter into the suffering and death of their Lord, not to check out its conformity to episcopal statements on Jewish-Christian relations."

I indeed expressed sympathy with Catholic scholars who wanted the film to follow the guidelines in question, but my criticism (and that of the other Jewish critic) directed at the bishops conference was aimed clearly and specifically at the largely laudatory review of the film by its office of film and broadcasting, which makes no mention whatsoever of the conference's own guidelines. The bishops decidedly sponsored that review, and they decidedly had control over it. Moreover, I immediately went on to say that despite this serious incident, the "deep change" effected by ecumenical activity over the years has not been neutralized.

As to the sarcastic allegation that I fail to appreciate the fact that Catholics viewed the film to identify with Jesus' suffering and not to determine its conformity to guidelines on interfaith relations, I can only scratch my head in bewilderment. Here is what I wrote about this point: "The film's reception rapidly demonstrated the near irrelevance of the framework within which much of the earlier discussion had taken place. Did viewers react to the movie based on the degree of its deviation from the criteria established by the bishops conference? The very question is comical. While the earlier debate did alert filmgoers to the specter of anti-Semitism, the vast majority reacted through the filter of their religious commitments." I did not direct a whisper of criticism toward the masses of Christian viewers for doing this.

In an accurate but still misleading passage, Fr. Neuhaus goes on to quote my exhortation to traditionalist Christians to understand that reasonable people who do not hate them—and in some cases like them very much—can feel that there are grounds for concern about the film. He continues as follows: "[Berger] also urges Jews to be patient with evangelical Protestants, whose political support is so crucial to the safety and well-being of the state of Israel." The sentence in my article represented by the phrase "be patient" and placed by Father Neuhaus in a largely self-interested context reads as follows: "Jews for their part will have to force themselves to recognize that the fervent embrace of this film by traditionalist Christian audiences is not necessarily a sign of hostility or even indifference toward them, that it emerges out of positive religious emotions as well as understandable resentments flowing from the demonization of the religious right by influential sectors of American public opinion." A bit earlier, I had indeed discussed the importance of evangelical support for Israel, but the emphasis here is on the intrinsic reasons for evincing understanding of the reactions of traditionalist Christians, a category by no means restricted to evangelical Protestants. Indeed, the comment about demonization alludes to an earlier passage where I wrote a vigorous, empathetic, even impassioned tribute to the defense by such Christians of core moral values and where I decried the abuse to which they are subjected for their admirable stand.

Finally, a brief word about Fr. Neuhaus' concluding point, which does not address my article. His assertion that the Anti-Defamation League has implied that "American Christians" are waiting for an excuse

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to kill Jews—not to mention his further assertion that Jewish reactions to the film demonstrate to Christians that "many Jews have fear and loathing for their religion and, by extension, for them"—is incendiary and goes well beyond any judicious assessment of the evidence. They do not contribute to the amity that Fr. Neuhaus says he hopes for.

David Berger
Broeklundian Professor of History
Brooklyn College and
The Graduate Center
City University of New York

RJN replies:
I appreciate Professor Berger's eagerness to clarify his views but am sorry that he thinks I am guilty of "several significant distortions." First, I did not say he criticized "literalists" in general, whether Christian or Jewish, but those literalists who defended *The Passion* as being in conformity with the biblical texts. Second, it is not accurate to suggest that his criticism of the bishops conference was limited to the review by the conference's film office. Apart from the question of whether the bishops do or should "control" reviews issued by that office, Prof. Berger is also sharply critical of the bishops for distancing the conference from charges by a group of scholars, well before the film's release, that *The Passion* is anti-Semitic. Berger wrote: "The scholars can hardly be blamed for having assumed—naïvely, as it turned out—that the [bishops] conference took its own published standards seriously." At another point, he wrote of "this betrayal of decades of Catholic-Jewish dialogue," and then, of course, there is the reference to the drawbridge being raised. Third, I frankly do not understand his unhappiness with what I said about his comments on Christians and support for Israel. In his article he discusses the matter with considerable delicacy. Finally, my observation about fear and loathing is not incendiary but is very sobering and is, I am afraid, amply supported by a fair reading of the evidence. That is all the more reason to deepen the conversation between Jews and Christians to which Prof. Berger and I are unquestionably devoted.

Hebrew Catholics?

I would like to respond to the review of my book, *Salvation Is From the Jews* (Briefly Noted, August/September), lest some unsuspecting reader believe that the review actually represents the content of the book. The statement, "Schoeman became active with the growing community of those who call themselves Hebrew Catholics," contains two errors. Not only did I not become active with any community of Jewish Catholics, but I have studiously avoided the term "Hebrew Catholic" when referring either to myself or to other Jews who have entered the Church. This second point is crucial, for many Jews today have falsely become convinced that Christianity is meant only for gentiles, and thus that to recognize Jesus for who he is leads inevitably to the loss of one's Jewish identity. Yet a major purpose of my book is to argue that in entering the Church, a Jew not only does not cease to be a Jew, but becomes even more Jewish—that is, a completed or fulfilled Jew. In fact, the term "Hebrew Catholic" appears in the book only within the name of the organization that uses the term.

Roy Schoeman
Gloucester, Massachusetts

A Catholic Islam

In his useful essay, "Islamic Counter-Reformation" (August/September), Paul Marshall says that hoping for an "Islamic Reformation" makes little sense because Islam already has so many Protestant features. To that, I would add two points.

First, in *The Decline of the West*, Oswald Spengler claimed that Islam is a Reformation, or perhaps the Puritan phase of a Reformation, within what he called Magian culture. In this instance, old Oswald was on to something.

Second, Islam has already tried Mr. Marshall's suggestion of moving in a "Catholic" direction. Shia Islam (once a larger part of the Muslim world than it is today) already has a hierarchy and a "magisterium." As we see in the Islamic Republic of Iran, however, these features do not always serve to mitigate Jihadist tendencies.

John J. Reilly
Jersey City, New Jersey

Paul Marshall replies:
Since my article loosely applied the Christian notions of "Reformation" and "Counter-Reformation" to another religion, Islam, I can hardly complain that Mr. Reilly does something similar. But I think he pushes too far. He is right that Spengler describes Islam itself as a Reformation and that there is something to this, but, by this point, the historical analogy with Protestantism has been stretched so far that it loses its meaning. The same can be said about the analogy between Shiism and Catholicism. Yes, Shiites are more hierarchical, but there is freedom to choose which hierarch one will follow, and this is rather different from a Counter-Reformation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Opinion

Embryology: Inconvenient Facts

William L. Saunders, Jr.

In the ongoing debate about cloning human embryos for research, and about destroying them in order to harvest their stem cells, it is important to keep some basic facts in mind. Our moral analysis must be built upon fundamental scientific truths. If we obscure the facts, then we will not think clearly or act responsibly about these issues.

Every human being begins as a single-cell zygote, grows through the embryonic stage, then the fetal stage, is born and develops through infancy, through childhood, and through adulthood, until death. Each human being is genetically the same human being at every stage, despite changes in his or her appearance.

Embryologists are united on this point. Consider the following statements from standard textbooks: "Human development begins at fertilization. . . . This highly specialized, totipotent cell marked the beginning of each of us as a unique individual" (Keith L. Moore and T. V. N. Persaud); "Almost all higher animals start their lives from a single cell, the fertilized ovum (zygote). . . . The time of fertilization represents the starting point in the life history, or ontogeny, of the individual" (Bruce M. Carlson); "Although life is a continuous process, fertilization is a critical landmark because, under ordinary circumstances, a new, genetically distinct human organism is thereby formed. . . . The embryo now exists as a genetic unity" (Ronan O'Rahilly and Faiola Muller).

Normally, the embryo comes into being through sexual conception, in which the female egg cell is fertilized by a male sperm cell. In sexual reproduction the new individual gets half of its chromosomes from the nucleus of the sperm cell and half from the nucleus of the egg cell. The new organism thus produced is genetically distinct from all other human beings and has embarked upon its own distinctive development.

In addition to this normal process, we have developed laboratory techniques with which to manipulate the procreation of new human organisms. One of these techniques stages the encounter of sperm with egg in a laboratory dish rather than in a woman's body. This is in vitro fertilization (IVF). Another technique is an asexual one in which no sperm is involved. Instead, an egg has its nucleus removed and replaced by a nucleus from another type of cell—a body cell. The egg is then stimulated by an electrical charge, creating a living human zygote. This is cloning, a process in which the body cell that donated the replacement nucleus supplies the chromosomes of the new human organism.

Whether the new organism is produced by fertilization or by cloning, each new human organism is a distinct entity. Twins are genetic duplicates of each other, but no one would deny that each is a distinct human individual. Similarly, a clone would be a genetic duplicate of another human being, but there is no denying that it would also be a separate individual.

From its first moment, supplied with its complete set of chromosomes, each new zygote directs its own integral functioning and development. It proceeds, unless death intervenes, through every stage of human development until one day it reaches the adult stage. It will grow and it will develop and it will change its appearance, but it will never undergo a change in its basic nature. It will never grow up to be a cow or a fish. It is a human being from the first moment of its existence. As Paul Ramsey has noted, "The embryo's subsequent development may be described as a process of becoming what he already is from the moment of conception."

These are the facts, which we can either affirm or deny. Unfortunately, the denial of inconvenient facts has become quite common during the past several decades. Consider, for example, an editorial published in the September 1970 issue of *California Medicine*, which was then the journal of the California Medical Association. The editorial invited the Association's members to play a new game called "semantic gymnastics." The first rule of the game was the "avoidance of the scientific fact, which everyone really knows, that human life begins at conception and is continuous whether intra- or extra-uterine until death." The goal was to replace "the traditional Western ethic" respecting "the intrinsic worth and equal value of every human life regardless of its state or condition" with "a new ethic for medicine and society" in order "to separate the idea of abortion from the idea of killing."

In subsequent years, the dehumanization of the unborn was taken a step further when the concept of the "pre-embryo" was advanced. The term referred to the embryo before its implantation in the womb. Certainly the embryo at this point is "pre-implantation," and certainly implantation is a highly significant event. If the embryo does not implant, it will die; if it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

implants, it will receive nutrition and a suitable environment in which to live, grow, and develop. (Every human being at every stage of life similarly requires nutrition and a suitable environment.) But the critical question is: Does implantation effect a change in the nature of the thing that implants? It is clear from basic facts of embryology that it does not. In the 2001 edition of his leading textbook on embryology, Ronan O'Rahilly writes, "The term 'pre-embryo' is not used here [because] . . . it may convey the erroneous idea that a new human organism is formed only at some considerable time after fertilization. [The term] was introduced in 1986 largely for public policy reasons."

For what public policy reasons was the term "pre-embryo" invented? Princeton biology professor Lee Silver, a noted advocate of all the new biotechnologies, supplies the answer in his *Remaking Eden* (1997):

> I'll let you in on a secret. The term pre-embryo has been embraced wholeheartedly by IVF practitioners for reasons that are political, not scientific. The new term is used to provide the illusion that there is something profoundly different between a six-day-old embryo and a sixteen-day-old embryo. The term is useful in the political arena—where decisions are made about whether to allow early embryo experimentation—as well as in the confines of a doctor's office where it can be used to allay moral concerns that might be expressed by IVF patients.

As Gilbert Meilaender has noted, the "pre-embryo" is merely the *unimplanted* embryo. In other words, it is already an embryo, and all embryos are, at first, unimplanted. An embryo subsequently implants unless something (or someone) interferes or the embryo is defective. Its life is continuous from its first moment (whether through fertilization or through cloning) until death. The term "pre-embryo" was developed and used largely, if not exclusively, to mislead: to hide scientific facts about the beginnings and unity of human life; to bolster support for a new reproductive technology; and to obtain funding for experiments on human embryos. It has led to a confused jurisprudence that treats the embryo, in certain contexts, more like property than like a human being.

Though the term "pre-embryo" has been rejected in science, the motive for its creation—to dehumanize the early embryo in order to justify its destruction—lives on. It is part of the debate over human cloning and human embryonic stem-cell research.

In the cloning debate, the attempt to deny what "everyone really knows" by finding a more accommodating language has been so convoluted that it would be amusing if lives were not at stake. First, proponents of cloning tried to deny that cloning creates a human embryo. Since, they argued, the new entity does not result from sexual reproduction, it could not be an "embryo." For reasons I have indicated (the nature of the product of cloning as a living, genetically complete, unified, self-integrating human organism in the first stage of development) few were taken in by that ploy. Even prominent advocates of embryonic stem cell research, such as John Gearhart of Johns Hopkins University, have acknowledged that the "thing" created by cloning is an embryo.

Some have asserted that the location of the thing in a Petri dish or in an IVF clinic (i.e., outside a woman's womb) means it is not an embryo. They assert that since it will never be implanted in a womb, it can never be a human being. On the Frequently Asked Questions page of the website of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology we are told that "the cells resulting from nuclear transplantation are grown in a culture dish in the presence of special nutrients for only a few days, when they will comprise a cluster of about 120 cells that can be used to derive stem cells. Therefore, because the cells are never transferred to a uterus they cannot develop into a human being on their own."

The question-begging nature of this assertion should be evident: if the cells are "never transferred to a uterus," it is because the people in the lab choose not to transfer them. It is disingenuous for those who would deprive the embryo of the chance to be born to claim that their action changes the nature and status of the thing considered. This is like the Nazis claiming that concentration camp inmates are not human beings because the Nazis intend to destroy them during lethal experiments. The argument is a variation on the theme of "potentiality"—since the "cluster of cells" lacks the potential to be born, it is not a human being. But the fact is that every human being, including every embryo, is full of inherent potential by virtue of being human. That potential may never be realized or it may be impeded in particular cases. But that potential—to live, to grow, and to develop—is part of what it means to be a living human being.

The advocates of cloning have also posited a distinction between "reproductive cloning" and "therapeutic cloning." Reproductive cloning, we are told, would see the clonal zygote transferred to a uterus and would, all other things being equal, result in the eventual birth of a human being. (This is a scenario that many people fear.) Therapeutic cloning, we are assured, would never approach anything like reproduction: the clonal zygote is simply kept in the lab, an innocuous cluster of cells to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be put to good scientific use. But this distinction is groundless. Once a living human zygote has been created, "reproduction" of a member of the human species has occurred, regardless of the purpose (birth or experiment) for which the clone was created. Thus, *all* human cloning is reproductive cloning.

Nor can the label "therapeutic" be properly applied to the cloning of a human being for the purpose of harvesting "its" useful parts and disposing of the remainder. For a procedure to be "therapeutic," it must be so for the subject of the procedure. (To drain me of my blood in order to stock a blood bank may eventuate in some therapeutic results for someone, but it is not therapeutic for me.) Medical ethics have always insisted that there be greater protection for the subject when the subject is not himself benefited by the procedure. Yet "therapeutic cloning" kills the subject (the embryo) every time (in order to get stem cells). The fact that the distinction between therapeutic and nontherapeutic procedures is so well established, with greater protection accorded subjects in nontherapeutic experiments, makes the decision of cloning proponents to use the term "therapeutic" even more troubling.

After opinion polls revealed that Americans did not like any kind of "cloning," whatever the adjectival modifier, cloning proponents took a bold gamble—they simply decided to *re-name* the procedure. Instead of "cloning," it would now be called "somatic cell nuclear transfer" or "nuclear transplantation to produce stem cells." But both phrases are simply definitions of cloning. Cloning is a laboratory procedure in which the *nucleus* from a *somatic* (body) cell is *transferred* or *transplanted* into an egg cell from which the original nucleus has been removed. The attempt to use five long words instead of one short one and to pretend that the five words denote something different is linguistic mischief, not science. Worse, with the phrase "nuclear transplantation to produce stem cells," cloning advocates seek to obscure a crucial fact: the procedure does not "produce stem cells"; it produces an embryo which is later killed so that its stem cells can be removed. Whatever the purpose of any act of embryo-creation may be, whether eventual birth or eventual disaggregation, it is a human embryo and thus a human being that is being produced and killed.

Human stem cells have indeed proven to have great value in the invention of new medical treatments, though it is significant that the only treatments developed to date have involved stem cells acquired nondestructively from nonembryonic sources, including adult donors. Therapies involving the use of adult stem cells are already numerous, whereas therapies derived from embryonic stem cells are still only theoretical (see, for example, Maureen L. Condic's "Stems Cells and False Hopes," FT August/September 2002). Wesley J. Smith has called the media coverage of advances in adult-stem-cell regenerative therapies "grudging," and notes that the favored theme in much media coverage is that embryos hold the key to the future.

Nonetheless, the public is becoming aware that stem cells can be obtained, nondestructively, from adults. And we are also becoming aware that the harvesting of stem cells from embryos cannot be accomplished without causing those embryos to cease to exist as organisms—that is, without killing them. My hope is that we come to understand clearly that it is a matter of scientific fact, and not of opinion, that the embryonic organisms we are being urged to exploit and discard are, like us, human beings.

William L. Saunders is Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Human Life and Bioethics in Washington D.C. Material in this essay is adapted from a chapter in Human Dignity in the Biotech Century *(InterVarsity).*

The Politics of Gratitude

Peter J. Leithart

Coriolanus is far from being the most popular of Shakespeare's plays, but many of us remember the plot from high school English. Caius Martius, a great Roman warrior, conquers the Volscian city of Corioli, and for this exploit he receives the honorific title "Coriolanus." Following his victory, Coriolanus, urged on by his ambitious mother Volumnia, stands for election as consul. To become consul, Coriolanus has to gain the support of both the patrician senate and the Roman people. Being a patrician himself, he easily secures the support of the senate, but to gain the support of the people he must don the robes of a pleb and go about the city asking, politely, for their support. This grates on the proud Coriolanus but he reluctantly follows custom and wins the post of consul. Immediately, the tribunes, who are democratic demagogues, convince the people to withdraw their support, and then provoke Coriolanus into an outburst that leads him to be charged with treason. His friends appeal to him to flatter and cajole the people to win back their support, but Coriolanus will not, and he is banished from Rome.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Coriolanus immediately goes to his old enemy, the Volscian general Aufidius, and offers to attack and conquer Rome on behalf of the Volscians. Aufidius accepts his help, and under the command of Coriolanus the Volscians win several battles and threaten Rome itself. Desperate, the Romans send Volumnia and Coriolanus' wife, Virgilia, to convince him to withdraw. Though he steels himself to resist the pull of filial affection, Coriolanus buckles under his mother's pleas and ends the siege. Though he knows that he has broken faith with Aufidius, he returns to the Volscians, who accuse him of treachery and kill him.

The personal drama of the story, which Shakespeare drew from Plutarch, is obvious: Volumnia must decide between loyalty to Rome and loyalty to her son; Aufidius is faced with the dilemma of accepting or rejecting his rival's aid; Coriolanus is caught in conflicts of various sorts—between plebs and patricians, between family and civic loyalties, between the Romans and Volscians. In the end, he is torn apart.

The political drama is equally plain, and has often been exploited, though in opposite directions. A production at Drury Lane in 1789 embodied the strongly anti-Jacobin politics of its producer, John Philip Kemble, idealizing the patrician characters and representing the plebs, in R. B. Parker's words, as "clownish, ineffectual dolts." Nazis produced the play during the 1930s to portray the evils of democracy and to celebrate Hitler as a conqueror greater than Coriolanus. So powerful was the play's resonance with Nazis that it was banned in the first years of Allied occupation. On the other side of the political aisle, many productions offer leftish interpretations that highlight the distasteful pride of Coriolanus and present the tribunes as champions of democracy. Eastern European productions in the 1930s turned the plebs and tribunes into heroes and condemned Martius as a tyrant. Bertold Brecht's unfinished adaptation thoroughly reinvented the story. Instead of being fearful and demoralized by Martius' attack on Rome, for example, the tribunes organize the plebs into a defense force so fearsome that Martius withdraws of his own accord.

Each of these political interpretations can find a warrant in the text. "What's the matter, you dissentious rogues, / That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion, / make yourselves scabs?" These are Coriolanus' first words in the play, and they set the tone for his other speeches to the plebs. He condemns them as cowardly hares and geese, complains of their body odor and bad breath, and at his banishment dismisses them as a "common cry of curs." His politics are profoundly antidemocratic. He wonders at the "double worship" of Rome's famously mixed political system, a system in which "gentry, title, wisdom / Cannot conclude but by the yea and no / Of general ignorance." On the other hand, it is difficult not to feel the force of his opinions. Isn't it in fact better for the wise and informed to make political decisions than to subject them to the veto power of the ignorant and apathetic? Shakespeare does not go out of his way to make the people of Rome attractive: they truly do not know what is good for them—thus demonstrating the cogency of Coriolanus' assessment. They gleefully banish their erstwhile hero, not stopping for a moment to ask what this will cost them. The tribunes control the plebs and are as contemptuous of the people in their own way as Coriolanus is.

Neither the elitist nor the democratic interpretation, however, gets to the political heart of the play, which is the fundamental political problem of gratitude. *Coriolanus* explores the relationship of gratitude and political order, or, more accurately, the relationship of ingratitude and political disorder. Ingratitude is a recurring theme in the play. In Act II, an officer discussing Coriolanus' campaign for consul tells a fellow officer that Coriolanus' military accomplishments "deserved worthily of his country" and says that "for [the plebs'] tongues to be silent and not confess so much were a kind of ingrateful injury." In the following scene the "Third Citizen" offers a similar opinion: "If he tell us his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptances of them. Ingratitude is monstrous, and for the multitude to be ingrateful were to make a monster of the multitude—of the which we being members, should bring ourselves to be monstrous members." In the event, the plebs prove their ingratitude by banishing Coriolanus, who, at the urging of Aufidius, determines to "pour war / Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome."

Ingratitude is also observed to be a flaw in Coriolanus. When his general Cominius commends his action at Corioli, Coriolanus responds that he cannot bear to be praised, and Cominius points out the defect lurking beneath this apparent humility: "Too modest are you, / More cruel to your good report than grateful / To us that give you truly." It is also clear that Coriolanus has no appreciation of the plebs who make up the Rome that he claims to protect.

Early in the play, the patrician Menenius tells the plebs the parable of the stomach, in which all the organs of the body rebel against the stomach because, though "idle and inactive," it gets the first share of all food. Deliberately and gravely and "with a kind of smile," the stomach explains to the body parts, "True it is . . . / That I receive the general food at first . . . / But, if you do remember, / I send it through the rivers

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of your blood, / Even to the court, the heart, to the seat o' the brain; / And, through the cranks and offices of man, / The strongest nerves and small inferior veins / From me receive their natural competency / Whereby they live." Throughout the play, Menenius' parable stands as an ideal by which Rome should be judged—and by its standard, Rome is weighed and found wanting. Far from functioning as distinct but equally necessary organs of a body, the patricians and plebs hold each other in mutual suspicion, forgetful of their interdependence. Forgetfulness breeds ingratitude; ingratitude breeds faction; and faction leads to civil war.

This emphasis on gratitude is characteristic of Shakespeare's Roman plays. As Clifford Ronan puts it in his fascinating study of early modern dramas set in ancient Rome, "this theme is not at the heart of most Tudor-Stuart tragedies with Christian settings, even if Macbeth is a striking exception." Rather, "most studies of *ingratitude*—lack of *gracious* acceptance—are to be found in tragedies with a pagan setting: in other words, beyond the customary sphere of *gratia*." Though "Roman dramas constitute 30 percent of Shakespeare's *oeuvre* . . . concordances suggest that these five plays and *Timon* contain fully 60 percent of the dramatist's four dozen uses of words like *ingrate*, *ungrateful*, and *ingratitude*." Ronan concludes that "Shakespeare and his fellow dramatists seem to have viewed the ancient world, particularly Rome, as stained with a cruel pride—self-interested, ungenerous, contentious, murderous." "Ingratitude is monstrous," and Rome, outside the realm of *gratia*, turns into a grotesque distortion of a body politic.

Shakespeare thus dramatizes the Augustinian perspective most recently articulated by Oliver O'Donovan—namely, that "within every political society there occurs, implicitly, an act of worship of divine rule." Political society is constituted by an act of worship—in the case of Shakespeare, an act of Eucharist, an act of mutual thanksgiving. And, from this angle, *Coriolanus* offers a deeper challenge to contemporary political life than has been recognized by interpreters of the play on either the left or the right. The foundation of all political order is *gratia*. That is the lesson of the play. It is an especially important lesson for us, who live at a time when discontent and complaint dominate public discourse. For Shakespeare, ingratitude is not merely a private moral flaw; it also represents a profoundly dangerous fraying of our political life. For we, too, stand condemned by Menenius' parable.

Peter J. Leithart is Senior Fellow of Theology and Literature at New St. Andrews College in Moscow, Idaho, and pastor of Trinity Reformed Church in Moscow.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Love of Saint Thérèse

Philip Zaleski

Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897), born Marie Françoise Thérèse Martin, also known as St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, popularly named the Little Flower, doctor of the Church and patron of a score of causes ranging from AIDS victims to Spanish air crews, famously acclaimed by Pope Pius X as "the greatest saint of modern times," never hesitated to rush in where angels fear to tread. One thinks in particular of her audience with Pope Leo XIII in late November 1887. The fourteen-year-old schoolgirl—ten years away from death and only thirty-eight from canonization—knelt before the pontiff, majestically arrayed on a white armchair attended by palace guards and Curia officials, seized his knees and, despite an explicit injunction against addressing His Holiness, blurted out a request: "Holy Father, I have a great favor to ask you!"

The Pope leaned toward her, so that "their faces nearly touched," and Thérèse hurriedly whispered her desire (despite her bishop's opposition) to become a Carmelite nun. Leo, flustered by this breach of protocol, first ventured a conventional response: "Ah well, my child, do what the superiors say." When Thérèse continued to argue, he appealed to God, enunciating each syllable like a patient schoolmaster: "Go . . . Go . . . you will enter if God wills it." But Thérèse refused to budge, clutching the Pope's legs more tightly still; finally papal guards intervened, lifting and dragging the now-sobbing girl to the exit. "In the bottom of my heart I felt a great peace," Thérèse recalled some years later, "[but] bitterness filled my soul, for Jesus was silent."

PHILIP ZALESKI *is a research associate in religion at Smith College. His next book, a study of prayer cowritten with his wife Carol, is forthcoming from Houghton Mifflin.*

This incident tells us much about Thérèse: her boldness, her stubbornness, her confidence, even at a young age, in her divinely appointed mission. It tells us just as much about how others saw and still see her. The old Pope is by turns interested but bewildered, annoyed but charmed. His chameleon response encapsulates the world's response to Thérèse. Has any saint provoked such a spectrum of reactions as she? The English novelist Vita Sackville-West, in one of the first biographies of Thérèse, dismissed her as "the lowbrow" among saints and claimed that "there was no originality in her thought," and Catholic theologian Karl Rahner confessed that "many things in Thérèse and her writings irritate me or quite simply bore me." On the other hand, along with Pius X's encomium, we have Hans Urs von Balthasar declaring that Thérèse's "whole life [was] an exposition of God's word," Pope John Paul II describing her as "a living icon" of God, and a tidal wave of popular support, expressed in the sales of her autobiography, *Story of a Soul*, which has reached millions of hands in sixty different languages and in the vast crowds that venerated the saint's relics during their recent voyage around the world. These responses cover nearly a century of controversy; as the third Christian millennium opens, a new crop of Thérèse books has appeared to continue the debate.

Even at a glance, Arthur Cavanaugh's *Thérèse: The Saint Who Loved Us: A Personal View*, stands out on two accounts: it is the only book under review that avoids a generic title; and it bears that rare ornament, a double subtitle. It is the second subtitle that catches the eye. Here is something more than a standard biography; Cavanaugh writes in confessional mode, dishing out highlights of his own Catholic odyssey and explaining how St. Thérèse more than once

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

helped him on his way. As a child plagued by loneliness and self-doubt, he first encountered the saint by glimpsing her statue in a shadowy corner of his local church. The image was unexceptional: a plaster Thérèse in black robes, sandaled, holding a crucifix wreathed in roses. But something awoke in the boy: "As I steered up one Woodhaven street and down another, the image of a young nun, a crucifix of roses in her arms, floated above, like a banner in the sky, following after me, all the way home."

This quasi-miraculous event presaged a lifetime of Theresian interludes. In Paris in 1945, sick with pneumonia and awaiting Army transport back to the United States, Cavanaugh stumbled upon a procession transporting the saint's relics from Notre Dame Cathedral, their temporary refuge during Allied bombings, to their permanent home in Lisieux; this glimpse of the tiny, silk-enclosed casket brought him back to the Church. In New York in 1956, he lent a picture of Thérèse, patroness of all the sick, to a friend dying of bone cancer and realized, as he did so, the primacy of God's love. In 1999, again in New York, he revisited Thérèse's relics in St. Patrick's Cathedral during their dramatic American tour and confirmed, as his first subtitle declares, that "she was the saint who loved us." The tone throughout is intelligent, nostalgic, devout; the style sometimes breathless, like a romance novel—Cavanaugh seems genuinely moonstruck by his saint—with a fondness for italicized exclamations (*"The roses, the roses!"*, *"Who was it, who could it be rather than my Thérèse?"*) but nonetheless thoroughly engaging, with the winsome appeal of a love story with a happy ending.

All this has the makings of a compelling memoir, but Cavanaugh heads in another direction. Thérèse's gravitational pull is too strong; he is locked into her orbit, and his personal memories serve merely as bookends to a recounting of Thérèse's own life. For reasons that remain unclear, he does not proceed chronologically but shuttles back and forth in time, going from Thérèse's death to her childhood to her posthumous fame to her convent years. This historical back-and-forth is ably handled, however, and the reader has little trouble assembling from these shards a coherent life.

And what a life it was, beginning in the damascene-and-brocade furnishings of a French bourgeois household and ending on a straw pallet in an unheated convent cell. In some measure, Thérèse's story is a fairy tale told backwards, a reverse Cinderella story in which our heroine exchanges golden slippers for rough monastic sandals and embraces a life of self-denial and suffering. Yet, like the original, this tale has a happy ending, sealed by love, in which death itself plays the fool.

Thérèse's first years had the quality of a golden age. She was a pampered princess, holding court over her four older siblings and adoring parents in a sheltered realm of well-bred manners and well-cooked meals. "Everything on this earth smiled on me; I found flowers under each of my steps," she remembered in *Story of a Soul*, employing the richly embroidered, overly sweet language that characterizes much of that volume (Sackville-West, exaggerating the effect, calls it "as nauseating as a surfeit of marshmallows"). Was she stifled by this warm but banal environment? Perhaps. Some of Thérèse's biographers have wondered that anything extraordinary could grow in such circumstances. But the close-knit family life instilled in her an unshakable belief in love's omnipotence, while the unflagging religious devotions in which all participated—daily Mass, praying the rosary, fasting, keeping the Sabbath—taught her the closeness of God and the fragile beauty of earthly things.

The death of her mother, when Thérèse was only four, shattered this cozy world. Suddenly, she later recalled, "the earth seemed to be a place of exile"; a long siege of grief and sorrow ensued, culminating in a mysterious illness marked by hallucinations and seizures. She was cured by what she and her family

Books Discussed in This Essay

Therese: The Saint Who Loved Us: A Personal View
By Arthur Cavanaugh
Paulist. 146 pp. $14.95.

Saint Therese of Lisieux: Doctor of the Universal Church.
By Steven Payne, O.C.D.
Alba House. 240 pp. $14.95.

Saint Therese of Lisieux.
By Kathryn Harrison
Viking. 227 pp. $19.95.

Saint Therese of Lisieux: Her Family, Her God, Her Message
By Bernard Bro
Ignatius. 253 pp. $15.95.

Saint Therese of Lisieux: A Transformation in Christ
By Thomas Keating
Lantern. 73 pp. $10.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

considered a miracle, one of the few times in her life that Thérèse—in striking contrast to her Carmelite predecessor and namesake Teresa of Avila—enjoyed a mystical transport: as she prayed for relief to a statue of Our Lady of Victories, the plaster figure grew radiantly lovely—"more beautiful than anything I had seen before"—and smiled at her. The sickness vanished, never to reappear.

What emerged instead, growing in intensity over the years, was a desire to follow in the footsteps of her older sisters by becoming a cloistered nun. First, however, she needed to be purged of her overweening self-love, perhaps the inevitable consequence of being a cosseted child in a culture that idolized childhood. The turning point, which Thérèse described as her "conversion" and as "a little miracle to make me grow up in an instant"—the inner counterpart to the external event of the smiling Virgin—came on Christmas Eve of 1886. She was ascending the stairs when she overheard her father complain about her spoiled, self-serving behavior; his angry words, perhaps because they fell upon a mind filled with images of the birth of one who came to serve others, triggered a revolution. "On that luminous night," she reported, "Our Lord accomplished in an instant the work I had not been able to do during years. Love and a spirit of self-forgetfulness took complete possession of my heart, and thenceforward I was perfectly happy." Students of French Catholic history or of God's contrapuntal grace will note that Paul Claudel's conversion transpired earlier the same day and a hundred miles to the southwest, during vespers at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

The immediate fruit of this transformation was a desire to work for the salvation of sinners. From now on, Thérèse vowed, she would rescue the fallen through the intensity and splendor of her prayers. She would take up impossible cases—reprobates, murderers, the dregs of humanity—and reclaim their souls. The next summer she read in the newspaper *La Croix* about Henri Pranzini, sentenced to the guillotine for triple murder. She resolved to redeem this vagabond-thug for God, declaring him her "first child" and entering an intense cycle of prayer, personal sacrifice, and attendance at Mass. She was absolutely certain that she would succeed; God could not reject petitions so passionate and pure. On the morning of his death, Pranzini again refused to repent. Then, when all seemed lost, an instant before offering his neck to the blade, the murderer seized a crucifix proffered by the attending priest and kissed it three times. When Thérèse heard the news, she burst into tears. God had spoken; henceforth she would be a missionary of love.

Once she entered the convent, Thérèse wrote poems, plays (in which she also acted), and her famous memoirs. Her most precious undertaking, however, remained the salvation of souls through prayer. In order to succeed in this tremendous enterprise, she needed to give herself unflinchingly to God. She did so during June 1895, in her "Act of Oblation to Merciful Love":

> In order to live in one single act of perfect Love, I OFFER MYSELF AS A VICTIM OF HOLOCAUST TO YOUR MERCIFUL LOVE, asking you to consume me incessantly, allowing the waves of *infinite tenderness* shut up within You to overflow into my soul, and that thus I may become a *martyr* of Your *Love*, O my God! . . . I want, O my *Beloved*, at each beat of my heart to renew this offering to You an infinite number of times, until the shadows have disappeared and I may be able to tell You of my *Love* in an *Eternal Face to Face!*

The peculiar orthography, with its exclamation marks, capitals, and italics so reminiscent of an adolescent's diary, faithfully reproduces the original. It reveals the high pitch of Thérèse's emotions but may obscure the gravity of her intentions. Yes, she was young and in her youthful ardor she sometimes fell into bathos, but she was venturing something new in the history of the Church, a vocation that encompassed all others:

> I understood that it was LOVE ALONE that made the Church's members act, and that if love ever became extinct, apostles would not preach the gospel, martyrs would refuse to shed their blood. I understood that LOVE CONTAINED ALL VOCATIONS, THAT LOVE WAS EVERYTHING, THAT IT EMBRACED ALL TIME AND ALL PLACES, IN A WORD, THAT IT IS ETERNAL!
>
> Then, in the excess of my ecstatic joy, I cried out: O Jesus, my love, at last I have found my vocation. MY VOCATION IS LOVE!

Love subsumed every work, every way; in love she would travel all roads at once, be soldier and peacemaker, apostle and hermit, priest and nun. Through the austere life of a cloistered Carmelite, devoted to contemplation, the *opus Dei*, and menial chores—that is, loving God through mind, heart, and body—she would help Jesus to save the world. Thenceforth, love would dictate every aspect of her behavior—how she would fold the laundry, scrub the floors, kneel before the altar. For love, she would always put others first. A

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

friend of mine once observed that "it must have been terrible to find that Thérèse was being particularly nice to you, because she always made a point of being particularly nice to people she didn't like." Thérèse developed a distrust of mysticism ("I do not wish to see the good God here on earth. . . . I prefer to live in faith.") and replaced it with what she called her Little Way, an immediate and complete abandonment to God's love.

The Little Way is in some sense a devotional analogue to Kierkegaard's leap of faith: instead of an intellectual vault over the abyss of doubt into Christian faith, an emotional vault over the abyss of self into Christian love. Cavanaugh describes it, inelegantly, as "a doctrine of liberation, taking us beyond our faults and limitations into a whole new realm of possibility." It is the way of childhood, of, in Thérèse's words, "a small child abandoning itself without fear in its father's arms," but also the way of the soldier, of storming heaven, "the way to *force* Jesus to come to your help." It is, she said, a form of martyrdom of love. In this spirit she embraced the sufferings of being a Carmelite—lack of sleep, lack of freedom to talk or travel, lack of familial or romantic attachment—and the sufferings of her own deteriorating health: "Out of love I will suffer and out of love rejoice."

As tuberculosis ravaged her body, new miseries struck: doubts about her profession, about the goodness of creation, even about the intentions of God. In the woods outside her window she saw a "black hole," and declared, "I am in a hole just like that, body and soul. Ah! what darkness." Yet this storm she weathered, too, through prayer and confidence in the primacy of love. After all, she pointed out on her deathbed, Jesus died as a "victim of love" and so might she; "to die of love does not mean to die in transports." It does mean, however, that love will be one's condition in the next world as well as in this vale of tears—a realization that leads to Thérèse's most famous saying, "I will spend my heaven doing good on earth." Love, for her, was an eternal project.

So ended the speeded-up life of St. Thérèse, but not, of course, her story. Cavanaugh devotes a large portion of his book to Thérèse's posthumous fame, telling with zeal the rise of her cult and making much of its numerous ironies—for example, that she was canonized largely because of public acclaim for a book that she desired neither to write nor to publish (she wrote under obedience to her prioress). *The Story of a Soul* was also, as Cavanaugh takes pains to point out, heavily bowdlerized. Shortly after Thérèse's death, her sister Pauline (by this time Mother Agnes, superior of the community), convinced that Thérèse was a saint, decided to edit the manuscripts to ensure that nothing indiscreet would see the light of day. She proceeded to delete, condense, expand, interpolate, and reorganize at will, introducing more than seven thousand alterations to the text, quenching much of the work's fire while retaining its sentiment, helping to produce the cloying tone on which Sackville-West and others have gagged. Cavanaugh, surprisingly, insists that Mother Agnes did "nothing to mar or efface her sister's doctrine or her message to us."

In a sense this is true: Thérèse's doctrine of the Little Way survived even Agnes' meddling hands. But we cannot overestimate the harm done by caramelizing Carmel, by producing a Thérèse whose courage and toughness—amply evidenced in the profundity of her life and the nobility of her death—remained for two generations obscured by this redaction of her writing. This is not to suggest that her unexpurgated autobiography is free of mawkishness. Even now few can read the book without wincing at the innumerable metaphors about flowers, little angels, little queens, and the like. But these are infelicities, not fatal flaws.

The book, largely through word of mouth, became a best-seller; the public, it seems, does not mind a bit of sugar in its saints. Thérèse's fame continued to spread. She was beatified in 1923 and, after letters attesting to miracles started arriving at the Vatican at the rate of one thousand per day, canonized in 1925. Then something happened that Cavanaugh describes as "unprecedented in the annals of the Church": a saint became a worldwide sensation. Shrines devoted to Thérèse sprang up from Alaska to Fiji. Statues of Thérèse appeared in thousands of churches. *The Story of a Soul* found its way into millions of homes, entrancing Protestants (and even Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims), as well as Catholics. In Lisieux, a vast basilica dedicated to Thérèse was erected southwest of the city center. She had become not only the greatest and most provocative saint of modern times, but the most popular as well.

Many reasons have been adduced for the public's lavish response: Thérèse's physical beauty (photographs show a pleasing, full-cheeked face with brooding eyes); her romantic death; her floral imagery; her native energy and kindness; her dazzling promise to spend eternity saving earthly souls, confirmed in the eyes of many by the bumper crop of reported miracles connected to her intercession; her doctrine of the Little Way, which laid out a path of sanctity in the midst of ordinary life. In any event, it is the last that led John Paul II in 1997, on the centenary of her death, to proclaim Thérèse a doctor of the Church, only the third woman (after Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena) and thirty-third saint to be so

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

honored. To understand why and how this happened, and, in the process, to help explain Thérèse's universal appeal, is the aim of Steven Payne's *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux: Doctor of the Universal Church*.

Payne's work lacks the intimacy and simplicity of Cavanaugh's congenial account. His manner is dry, formal, and understated. Nonetheless, the book draws one in, in part because its topic has generated some controversy: after all, Thérèse was neither a scholar nor a theologian; her schooling was limited; she published nothing during her life; her writings suffer from surface naïveté and a penchant for overblown metaphors. Why, then, should she rank alongside Augustine, Aquinas, and Anselm as a *doctor ecclesiae*?

Payne begins, in workmanlike fashion, by recounting the etymological history of the title. The term "doctor" emerges in the Pauline letters of the Vulgate, as a translation for the Greek "teacher." A doctor is one who transmits the gospel, teaching by word and example. During the patristic era, it became an honorific attached to those outstanding in evangelical skill and zeal. During the eighth century, the Venerable Bede crowned four men—Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, and Jerome—with the title, a choice officially ratified, a half-millennium later, by Boniface VIII's bull of 1298. This handful of doctors soon became a multitude, as Aquinas, Bonaventure, John Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and others joined the ranks. The list, now thirty-three strong, ranges from the famous (Bernard of Clairvaux, John of the Cross) to the obscure (Ephraim the Syrian, Lawrence of Brindisi). All satisfy the three defining criteria of outstanding holiness, eminence of doctrine, and an official proclamation by pope or general church council.

Does the Little Flower meet these qualifications? From the very beginning, she had her advocates; the abbot of Gethsemane Abbey in Louisville, Kentucky, seems to have been the first to propose her for the doctorate, just three years after her canonization. The first worldwide petition circulated in 1932 and gathered, within a year, the signatures of 342 bishops. Prominent theologians such as Erich Przywara, Yves Congar, and Hans Urs von Balthasar championed Thérèse's mission and detailed her contributions to theology and spirituality. Nonetheless, the drive stalled, the reason, as Pius XI tersely remarked, being "*obstat sexus*." But in 1970 Paul VI named as doctors two women, Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena, and the wheels began to turn for Thérèse, setting in motion a process of committee meetings, documentations, debates, analyses, and pronouncements, with curial officials, cardinals, bishops, and laity tugging this way and that. Payne sorts through the tangle with an attention to detail that will delight some readers and weary others; for example, he glosses each chapter of the *Positio*, a "large, red, clothbound, folio-sized volume of nearly one thousand pages" encasing a small mountain of background documents along with the reflections of seven theologians on the proposed doctorate. Naming a new doctor of the Church is, Payne amply demonstrates, a daunting process, but one completed, in the case of Thérèse, in near-record time. The participants enjoyed one great advantage, for thanks to numerous eyewitness testimonies and the saint's own obsessively self-referential writings, more is known about Thérèse than about all but a few other saints.

The assembled experts had no difficulty dealing with the first doctoral criterion of outstanding sanctity. To a man (and one woman) they praised Thérèse's radiant holiness, agreeing that her humility, her goodness, her integrity, her radical submission to God's will, set upon her unmistakably the seal of sanctity. As the *Positio* mentions, people of many faiths revere Thérèse for her holiness; more than one Orthodox icon contains her image, and Cairo houses a Muslim shrine in her honor. Far more vexing was the second criterion, that of "eminence of doctrine." According to precedent, the candidate must bring to the theological table a teaching that is original, profound, faithful to tradition, and of strong and lasting influence. But did Thérèse have any doctrine at all to offer the Church?

A consensus developed that Thérèse did fulfill the requirement—but only with a caveat. One must first acknowledge that a new kind of doctor has emerged in the Church, a master of spirituality rather than theology, and that the definition of *doctor ecclesiae* must evolve to keep pace. The cases of Francis de Sales (proclaimed doctor in 1877) and Anthony of Padua (1946) initiated this new understanding; Thérèse confirmed it. This granted, her preeminence becomes apparent. Her Little Way, with its radical insistence upon childlikeness and absolute love, constitutes an original and profound elaboration of gospel principles. The influence of her doctrine is enormous and seems likely to last. Austria's Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, the most distinguished of the seven theologians to examine the case, argued in the *Positio* that Thérèse's mission came directly from God, and that it has "changed the climate of the Church" through its definitive rejection of Jansenism in favor of the "Mystery of a God who is Love." That Thérèse accomplished this largely through the example of her personal sanctity constitutes her particular "charism of wisdom." John Paul II, during

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his homily for the October 19, 1997, Mass proclaiming Thérèse a doctor, confirmed this perspective by observing that "it is precisely this convergence of doctrine and concrete experience, of truth and life, which shines with particular brightness in this saint."

In *Divini Amoris Scientia*, his apostolic letter announcing the doctorate, the Pope goes even further. Thérèse was a master of "the science of divine love" who "experienced divine revelation," "knew Jesus," and "penetrated the mysteries of his infancy," making her a "living icon" of God. Moreover, the Pope adds, Thérèse's Little Way is at once "unique" and "the most basic and most universal truth." She thus draws from the wellsprings of the gospel and prepares the future harvest of the Church. Adding his own coda to this crescendo of praise, Payne suggests that Thérèse's writings may be taken as a model for a new kind of theological reflection, deeply rooted in Scripture and tradition, that yields fundamental insights—witness her "rediscovery" of the God of infinite mercy or her revolutionary idea of heaven as a place, not only of beatific vision, but of earthly activity. Thérèse proves to be not only a saint, but, in Balthasar's memorable phrase, a saint who practices "theology on its knees."

Unless, of course, one sees her as a closet neurotic, a masochist and fetishist, a hysteric driven by forces beyond her control. Such is the interpretation offered by Kathryn Harrison, novelist and memoirist (*Thicker Than Water*; *The Kiss*). Harrison is celebrated for her lyrical style, and she doesn't disappoint in this regard, painting scenes from Thérèse's life with beautiful precision. Here is Thérèse as a teenage nun:

> The austerity of the convent, its bare cells and simple, whitewashed refectory, its stone hallways traveled by identically dressed women, silent except for the sweep of the habit, the hiss of rope sandals—all this presents a physical grace and order that materialism had buried. At fifteen, an age that seeks a new language, a separate identity, Thérèse must have longed for bare stone floors underfoot as much as she did doctrine overhead.

Harrison goes about her job briskly, covering all the major events of Thérèse's life in a compact two hundred pages. It is what she does with these events that raises eyebrows, then hackles. The first clue is the author's disproportionate focus upon Thérèse's mother, a sure sign that a Freudian sensibility is at work. Soon enough, Harrison informs us that "contemporary readers" (in which category she clearly places herself) "cannot free themselves from post-Freudian suspicion," and suspicion becomes the instrument with which Harrison dissects Thérèse, who suffers death by a thousand cuts under the deconstructionist scalpel. She is guilty of "monomania," of "zero ability to deal with rejection and separation"; her attempt to save Pranzini is "a triumph of sexual repression"; her desire to fulfill her Lenten vows despite her fatal illness is "a spasm of masochistic excitement"; Christ is for her "a narcotic promise"; even her charity in giving other Carmelite sisters the first pick of tools, while reserving old or damaged items for herself, is nothing but "fetishism." The Church comes under a similar Freudian-Foucaultian barrage. It is "hostile to all earthly pleasures"; Carmelite spirituality is one of many "programs that deny human frailty and desire"; the Divine Office promotes "exhaustion, lack of feeling, the emotional depletion from which many religious suffer." As for that dramatic moment in Thérèse's childhood illness when she shouted out, "They want to poison me"—who knew, before Harrison, that this expressed Thérèse's "toxic despair" at being forced to swallow the Church's teaching that God is love?

These wayward interpretations mount as the book progresses, reaching their climax in the declaration that Thérèse's typically floral and admittedly florid metaphorical description, in her poem "The Divine Dew, or The Virginal Milk of Mary," of Jesus as a "new bud, gracious and scarlet red," when properly decoded, reveals the Lord as "a phallic flower who, crucified, bleeds milk." The reader waits breathlessly for Harrison to extend the analysis to Jesus' masochistic desire for the Cross (itself a phallic symbol, the crossbar representing thwarted sexuality), or to his deeply neurotic relationship with his mother.

Here and there, Harrison seems to realize the inadequacy of her approach. She rarely tells us directly what she thinks, often placing her analysis in the hands of imagined readers ("a contemporary audience does insist upon psychology before marvels"). In one passage Harrison suggests indirectly, by way of rhetorical questions, that neurosis and supernatural revelation might mingle in the same religious experience. One wishes that she had explored this further, because the path to sanctity is indeed strewn with brambles, and no doubt many of the Church's great saints give evidence of abnormal psychology. But this she fails to do. Instead, she has written a study that is blind to the true meaning of Thérèse's life, that describes a Catholicism Thérèse would never recognize as her own, and that, faced with the mystery of holiness, retreats into neo-Freudian reductionism.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This lovely poisoned pill of a book is the last to give anyone as an introduction to Thérèse.

The battered reader may turn with relief from Harrison to the lucid, down-to-earth presentations of Bernard Bro and Thomas Keating, each of whom advances, albeit incrementally, our understanding of the saint. Bro, a Dominican and a celebrated Thérèse scholar, has produced a sturdy, sensitive biography, here translated from the French, that covers all the important bases and, in two or three places, ventures into unexplored territory. He is particularly good at emphasizing the unprecedented nature of Thérèse's abandonment to God, a surrender that skips all the stages of mystical ascent favored by earlier saints. Also helpful is his emphasis upon the Christocentric nature of Thérèse's devotions; he suggests that non-Christians who might appropriate Thérèse as an apostle of generic love miss the point, for she teaches not love for its own sake, but love of Christ for Christ's sake. Unfortunately these discussions and others are marred by a puzzling translation in which the bones of the original French syntax and diction show through; it is anyone's guess what is meant by "one can live alone and still live intensely with genius, poetry, action, generosity, but one dies of it" or "God alone can testify to God through a current Pentecost." These incoherencies aside, Bro's work may serve as a worthy alternative to Cavanaugh for those craving a more comprehensive discussion of Thérèse's always elusive theology.

Readers in search of a condensed approach to Thérèse's spirituality might turn to Keating's slim volume. In his customary warm, unaffected manner, Keating examines six of Jesus' best-known parables to see how they "resonate" with the teachings of Thérèse, whom he considers to be "the key figure in the recovery of the contemplative dimensions of the gospel in our time." Keating's approach offers much comforting advice ("God is fully present at all times!"), little intellectual analysis, and the occasional patch of jargon ("the Little Way is the path of liberation from our false self with its over-identification with our emotional programs for happiness and our cultural conditioning"). The shortest of the books under review, it has the merits of concision, clarity, and simplicity.

What can we deduce from these recent studies of Thérèse? Above all, that we have entered a period of recapitulation in our understanding of this great saint. The primary materials—autobiography, notebooks, letters, poems, conversations—have been published and competently translated into all the major tongues; the authors discussed in this review usefully gloss these writings but, with the exception of Payne, break little new ground. We might surmise that the subject of Thérèse has been exhausted, but in fact various aspects of this great saint and her mission are crying out for investigation. A definitive scholarly biography has not yet been published. The last major theological study of the saint, by Balthasar, appeared more than half a century ago. A number of new areas for meditation, research, and writing beckon. "Thérèse," as John Paul II has said, "is a teacher for our time," and one can readily discern ways in which her significance for contemporary culture needs elaboration. Let me suggest a few.

Thérèse provides an example of a woman free, for the most part, from those mystical extremes (vision, bilocation, levitation, ascetical excess) that characterize so many of her great female predecessors. What Thérèse did, any woman could do. Thus, she offers a prototype for feminine devotion and feminine heroism particularly apt for a skeptical age, a sanctity that, as John Paul II wrote in *Divini Amoris Scientia*, demonstrates "that practicality and deep resonance of life and wisdom which belongs to the feminine genius." Nor did she see any separation between mission in the ordinary sense of preaching the gospel and her perceived mission to teach the Little Way. She staunchly supported, through prayer and letter-writing, the missionary activity of the Church. At a time when interfaith etiquette is often assumed to require silence or compromise in the face of other religions, Thérèse provides a bulwark of support for new evangelization and (hope is always permitted) for the re-evangelization of Europe.

Thérèse also bolstered the priesthood, succoring and strengthening God's ministers through prayer and friendship. Many good priests feel misunderstood, even abandoned. Thérèse points a way for those who would like to help. In addition, she offers a solution to the issue of women's ordination by cultivating the vocation of love as an expression of the universal priesthood of all believers.

And finally, she lived with complete fidelity as a contemplative and a celibate, two modes of practice under fierce attack these days. The most ancient disciplines and devotions of Christian life become, in Thérèse's hands, not so much entrenched positions to defend as astonishing new movements of the Holy Spirit. Here, again, she provides hope for the future.

One wants to be cautious about corralling any saint into the culture wars, but others have already dragged Thérèse onto the battlefield. During the extended debates that preceded her proclamation as a doctor of the Church, the loudest opposition came from those who perceived her as a standard-bearer for female subservience and outmoded devotional practices, a lapdog of the Catholic right. Such an interpretation fails for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

several reasons—most obviously because it fails to see that Thérèse dwells neither on the left nor on the right but in the very heart of the Church. Thérèse makes the same demands upon everyone; her Little Way, precisely because it unfolds in the most humdrum of circumstances, and through the agency of love—the natural inclination of every heart—calls everyone to sanctity. There is no escape.

Why, then, such vociferous and opposing views? Perhaps because Thérèse stands, to borrow Oscar Wilde's felicitous phrase (which he applied to himself), in symbolic relation to the culture of her age. Comparing Thérèse to Wilde, her contemporary, reveals much. Both wrote obsessively about themselves and both declared their own greatness—he as artist, she as saint. Wilde attempted to conform Christ to himself (his prison memoir, *De Profundis*, paints Jesus as an eloquent aesthete); Thérèse attempted to conform herself to Christ. In a sense, although neither knew of the other, we can imagine them joined in battle. Against his celebration of self, her self-denial. Against his promiscuity, her chastity. Against his indulgence, her obedience. Against his cult of earthly beauty, her cult of heavenly glory.

Of the victor there can be no doubt. Wilde converted on his deathbed, received into the Catholic Church by a Passionist priest, a follower of St. Paul of the Cross, who saw in the Crucifixion "the greatest work of divine love," a perception that Thérèse, master of "the science of divine love," would surely second. Who knows? Perhaps Wilde, who died just three years after Thérèse, was one of the first fruits of her resolution "to spend her heaven doing good on earth," his last-minute submission to Christ a realization that Christianity must rule both culture and souls. From this perspective Thérèse, not Wilde, is the touchstone against which modern culture must be measured. We may safely say that Thérèse's mission, as these five books reveal through commission and omission, has just begun. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Christopher Lasch and the Limits of Hope

Patrick J. Deneen

Christopher Lasch's untimely death in 1994 deprived America of its most loving critic, a man who in his intellectual work followed John Winthrop's counsel, "We must entertain each other in brotherly affection. We must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of others' necessities." Impossible to pigeonhole politically, Lasch seemed to be simultaneously to the left and to the right of most people. Possessed of a deft pen and a blessed impatience, he exposed cant and false posing among intellectuals, and railed against the false constraints of contemporary political discourse. But his polemicism was always directed to a clear end: the end was to revive, for a democracy prone to rely on mere optimism, the great Christian virtue of hope, in both its expectant and humble forms.

In the two books published shortly before his death, *The True and Only Heaven* and *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy*, Lasch elaborated on the distinction between hope and optimism, seeking to show his American readers that "the party of hope" was not, as Emerson had said it was, identical with the "party of innovation" and arrayed in opposition to the "party of conservatism" and its fidelity to memory and the past. Most often appealing only implicitly to the long theological tradition that connects hope and humility, Lasch argued on behalf of a number of "conservative" cultural positions—even while condemning the inequalities, loss of individual liberty, and social instability bred by modern capitalism—and he made his argument in the name of, not in spite of, his devotion to democracy.

Lasch questioned the widespread modern and liberal American assumptions that commonly identify democracy with progress, individualism, and secularism; he wrote of hope's connections to and reliance upon memory, virtue, limits, and humility, and, finally, of hope's source in the spiritual discipline of religion. He sought to reclaim hope from those who had lifted it from its theological context, and who had thereby separated it from any conception of limitation or humility. Lasch affirmed a conception of human equality that arose from a shared sense of human frailty. In his view, it is upon this shared sense that democracy ultimately rests.

Lasch observed that populist forms of democratic equality, promoted most fervently at the end of the nineteenth century, had during the twentieth century been routed by a liberalism that promised progress, meritocracy, cosmopolitanism, scientism, the "therapeutic" regime, and secularism. By surmounting the natural sense of human limits, liberalism had sought to open up endless possibilities for advancement and individual cultivation, but it did so at the expense of democratic virtues that had once been inculcated in local communities—such "middle-class" virtues as moderation, a sense of limits, and an acknowledgement of the inescapability of tragedy in human life. In the name of left-wing populism and egalitarianism, Lasch found himself siding with the "conservative" critics of liberalism against the progressive assumptions of left-wing liberals.

Modern progressives identified democracy with

PATRICK J. DENEEN *teaches political theory at Princeton University. This essay is drawn from a forthcoming book,* Democratic Faith, *to be published in 2005 by Princeton University Press.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

radical individualism on the one hand and global interdependence on the other. This simultaneous narrowing and near-infinite expansion of the human horizon resulted in modern individuals who resisted the intermediary position of citizenship—a position that insists on the necessity of common undertakings and yet resists the dissolution of local forms of life in the name of opportunity and progress. Lasch recommended concrete rather than abstract recognition of our interdependence, insisting that an interdependence personally encountered would more readily lead to the virtues necessary for a democratic community. Instead, modern liberals justified the "secession of the successful" in the name of individual liberty, the abandonment of the less fortunate in favor of "lifestyle enclaves" where the elites could live in comfortable isolation. Even the fading sense of *noblesse oblige* among an older set of aristocrats was preferable to the widespread sense of self-congratulation among contemporary liberals. Prevailing notions of individual entitlement to the fruits of one's own superior labor meant that one owed no duty or obligation to those who hadn't succeeded. Moral and civic equality had been effectively replaced by "equality of opportunity"—a form of equality that resulted in radical forms of material inequality and that had given rise to a new "aristocracy of talent"; and, strangely, this new aristocracy claimed to have arisen as a result of the increasing perfection of democracy—now understood as progressive market-based liberalism.

For Lasch, these developments represented a betrayal of democracy: citizenship had been replaced by individualism; virtue had been supplanted by an ethic of material success; belief in equality and in civic obligations had given way to claims of individual liberty and an emphasis upon autonomy. Curiously, while the spirit of aristocratic generosity had all but vanished, in its place appeared an even more inegalitarian form of attention to the less fortunate—namely, "compassion" and its attendant therapies. The ethic of self-creation gave rise to a widespread sense that one was solely responsible for the outcomes of one's own choices. The failure of the underclass was explained as the product of poor choices, and these poor choices were attributed to various social pathologies that could be cured by means of social intervention. The elites could believe that their enviable position was simply the result of superior effort while diagnosing the failures of "second-class citizens" as due to social, psychological, or physical circumstances beyond their control.

A curious paternalism was the result: recourse to the impersonal helping professions replaced the duty of individuals to be responsible to one another. An underlying acknowledgment that we share a common destiny gave way to the reductive categories of health and illness. Most importantly, democracy ceased to be defined as a system of self-governance based upon the assumption of common competence. As Peter Lawler has written, Lasch believed that "the self-indulgence of compassion allows both classes to shy away from the hard work really required to raise the competence of everyone. Compassion-based toleration is really a form of apathetic indifference for the characters or souls of our fellow citizens."

In its place, Lasch recommended a populism that aimed at a more "strenuous and moral definition" of human excellence, in particular with the democratic goal of "universal competence." In *The True and Only Heaven*, Lasch repeatedly praised those thinkers in the British and American traditions who recommended lives and economies of *independence* rather than *interdependence*. Democracy, for Lasch, did not rest upon the ability of each person to produce his or her own means of survival, but it did depend upon those beneficial forms of psychic independence that result from populist politics and local economies. It could not thrive in a society of consumers or on the mentality of dependence exhibited by wage-laborers. Forms of basic economic self-sufficiency were part of Lasch's conception of democratic equality. Lasch rejected the linkage of democracy to the liberal economic notion that highly advanced economic development would extend equality—understood as "equality of opportunity"—by means of economic interdependence. The predictable result of such theories was an economic and social stratification that divided elite "symbolic analysts" from ordinary manual laborers. Liberalism aimed at liberation, but only for those few highly successful meritocrats who thereafter successfully ceded from the common life of democratic society.

Strenuous self-sufficiency, Lasch argued, was the only means to ensure self- and mutual-respect among equal citizens. Far from seeing their lives as separate and unconnected, self-sufficient populist democrats were keenly aware of human limits and of the need for a self-governance undertaken in common. Modest populist economies tended to be more local—and within such circumscribed civic contexts, one could more readily perceive the links that were forged between citizens who were considerably more self-reliant than contemporary interdependent individualists. On behalf of democracy Lasch insisted upon the superiority of visible local interchange to abstract global interdependence.

Such local forms of life also afforded the space for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more than merely economic interchange. Called by Ray Oldenburg "third places" between the private sphere of home and the public spaces of official life, such settings were the wellspring of vital civic practices. Offering dignity and equality, such spaces inculcated the "art of conversation." Lasch expressed disagreement with communitarians who, in his view, assumed that community was a space of automatic unanimity and comfortable conformity. Lasch praised such localities not because they easily produced agreement but rather because they offered opportunities for heated exchange and disagreement. The art of conversation that had been lost as those spaces had given way to an increasingly atomized existence in suburbs, lifestyle enclaves, and bloodless international markets. In contrast to liberal thinkers who advanced a form of democracy-as-decision-making by which elites and experts forge appropriate policies that are approximately guided by the inchoate opinions of otherwise unbothered and apathetic citizens, Lasch praised democratic dialogue because of its *inefficiency*:

> If we insist on argument as the essence of education, we will defend democracy not as the most efficient but as the most educational form of government, one that extends the circle of debate as widely as possible and thus forces all citizens to articulate their views, to put their views at risk, and to cultivate the virtues of eloquence, clarity of thought and expression, and sound judgment.

Democracy deserves our embrace not for enabling governmental stability or efficient production of goods and information, but as the form of government best at fostering more complete human beings. Underlying Lasch's conception of a local, dialogic, egalitarian democracy of independent yet engaged citizens is an anthropology not altogether different from Aristotle's: human beings are by nature "political animals" who achieve full faculties of judgment and civic virtue by means of participation in ruling and being ruled in turn.

In advancing this conception of populist democracy as an alternative to the predominant liberal conception (and in claiming as proponents of it such figures as Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Carlyle, Orestes Brownson, Abraham Lincoln, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Martin Luther King), Lasch sought to reintroduce a link between democracy and limits that had been broken by liberalism's promise of near-infinite economic, material, and even moral progress. For Lasch, the attempt to supplant the local ecology in which democratic life flourishes risks the destruction of the very conditions that make democracy possible. Liberalism was disassembling the very moral sources that it relied upon. Though speaking in the name of equality and liberty, liberalism advanced political (expert) and economic (meritocratic) beliefs that corroded the virtues necessary to democracy. With its promises of controlling nature, releasing individuals from all forms of necessity and limitation, and finally overcoming human alienation, liberalism was supremely dangerous. Lasch believed it was premised upon an infantile psychology.

Lasch feared that democracy was imperiled by liberalism's adherence to a voluntarist conception of human relationships. For Lasch, an inescapable limitation upon human beings is their *givenness*: one cannot escape one's condition as a created being. The effort to do so results in internal psychological damage; it also endangers those other humans who might come to be regarded as obstacles to the fulfillment of one's individual happiness. Lasch's insight that democracy is primarily premised upon an attitude of "acceptance" rather than "transformation" is evident in his many discussions of family. Givenness is especially a feature of the relationship between parents and children: each child is a surprise, a gift, a unique and unpredictable adventure, as well as a visible sign of one's willingness to sacrifice much of one's own personal preference and freedom. For Lasch, the modern embrace of both no-fault divorce and abortion policies that justify unlimited infanticide stood as concrete and horrific evidence of the modern effort to subject all human and natural phenomena to control and planning. The modern abortion regime is but one reflection of "an unquestioning faith in the capacity of the rational intelligence to solve the mysteries of human existence, ultimately the secret of creation itself" and the desire to engage in "the conquest of necessity and the substitution of human choice for the blind workings of nature."

Lasch argued that the prospects for democracy, and perhaps for the soul of humanity, hang in the balance. Arrayed on one side are modern elites who claim the mantle of democracy in the name of personal autonomy, mobility, meritocracy, and cosmopolitanism. They seek the mastery of necessity and the overcoming of accident by means of the awesome controlling power of science and technology. In the background is their vision of overcoming tragedy—of never having to choose between incommensurable goods—and ultimately escaping all limitations, finally death itself. In the foreground is their condemnation of various parochialisms, patriotisms, and unchosen loyalties that limit personal autonomy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and voluntarism. This elite threatens to betray democracy, to leave behind (under the care of attendant therapeutic experts) those who are undereducated and less mobile—the losers in the meritocratic sweepstakes—and to abandon a shared conception of universal "democratic competence."

What modern elites mean by "democratic faith" is their belief in the ability of some, if not all, to make themselves wholly at home in the world by means of scientific mastery and the overcoming of human alienation, and what this entails as its likely result is a disdain for ordinary people—a "betrayal of democracy." One can expect to find among the cultural, intellectual, and economic elite, says Lasch, a "snobbish disdain for people who lack formal education and work with their hands, an unfounded confidence in the moral wisdom of experts, an equally unfounded prejudice against untutored common sense, a distrust of any expression of good intentions, a distrust of everything but science, an ingrained irreverence, a disposition (a natural outgrowth of irreverence and distrust) to see the world as something that exists only to gratify human desires."

On the other side are ordinary citizens in the populist tradition, mistrustful of various forms of progress, willing to assume obligations that arise from family, community, and nation (thus more likely to enlist in the armed forces), less likely to feel cosmopolitan yearnings and the attractions of mobility. Such populists are far more likely to accept, even to embrace, human limitation. Embeddedness in daily life, the willingness to forgo immediate pleasures and personal convenience for the sake of others, and the cultivation of common "democratic competence" rather than exclusionary expertise are more likely to lead to an endorsement of "democratic realism," even as cultural elites are likely to regard such "realism" (born of limitations and imperfection) as fundamentally antidemocratic. Those who readily acknowledge human limitation, the limits upon progress, and the enduring mysteries of existence are most apt to recognize that "alienation is the normal condition of human existence."

Contributing perhaps most profoundly to the recognition of the inescapability of human alienation, and hence to the need for loyalty and limits rather than "escape" and "progress," is the persistence of religious belief among most ordinary citizens. This persistence offends the cultural, intellectual, and economic elite, and even fosters anxiety among them, because it flies in the face of the Enlightenment creed that religious faith would be overcome with the advent of scientific progress, economic development, and political liberalization. Seen by elites as superstitious and unwarranted, religious belief is derided as intellectual pabulum and false emotional security, while public policies that arise from religious traditionalism (including limits upon divorce, abortion, and efforts to protect the cohesion of local communities) are viewed as irrational, inegalitarian, illiberal, arbitrary, and oppressive.

Lasch wrote with particular vehemence in disputing this portrayal of religious belief, arguing that religion is profoundly misunderstood by its liberal opponents, as well as by some religious adherents. Religious belief is not to be understood as a source of complacent self-righteousness or easygoing comfort and security, but rather as a source of profound challenge. Lasch wrote that the standard liberal caricature of religion

> misses the religious challenge to complacency, the heart and soul of faith. Instead of discouraging moral inquiry, religious prompting can just as easily stimulate it by calling attention to the disjunction between verbal profession and practice, by insisting that a perfunctory observance of prescribed rituals is not enough to ensure salvation, and by encouraging believers at every step to question their own motivations. Far from putting doubts to rest, religion has the effect of intensifying them. It judges those who profess faith more harshly than it judges unbelievers. It holds them up to a standard of conduct so demanding that many of them inevitably fall short. . . . For those who take religion seriously, belief is a burden, not a self-righteous claim to some privileged moral status. Self-righteousness, indeed, may be more prevalent among skeptics than believers. The spiritual discipline against self-righteousness is the very essence of religion.

Lasch's theological understanding, drawn from a variety of sources, but prominently dependent upon a tradition of Augustinian Calvinism that found an American voice in Jonathan Edwards, advances a complex interplay of belief and doubt, faith and anxiety, affirmation and renunciation. Belief in a beneficent divinity does not result in the easygoing conclusion that God's creation is aligned in humanity's favor or that His will exists in seamless accord with human desires. The immediate and chastening consequence of such belief is the unavoidable acknowledgment, in the words of Leszek Kolakowski, that "God owes us nothing." Rather than suggesting humanity's centrality in divine creation or lending support to a view of humanity that endorses efforts to conquer nature and render fortune and tragedy altogether tractable, real

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

religious belief forces the religious penitent to acknowledge human dependence and weakness, and to regard temptations toward mastery as forms of sinful and hubristic pride.

Lasch endorses Jonathan Edwards' view that most forms of belief in self-sufficient human agency are born of fundamental rebellion against human createdness and dependency: "Rebellion against God, according to Edwards, was simply the normal condition of human existence. Men found it galling to be reminded of their dependence on a higher power." Religious belief combines a recognition of the inescapability of sin, pride, and attendant evils in the created world with a confidence that the universe is essentially good, since it has been created by a loving God: "Religious faith asserts the goodness of being in the face of suffering and evil." With renunciation of the idea that humanity has a "right" or entitlement to happiness arises the possibility of a truer form of happiness; this happiness springs from a heightened sense of human dependency and contingency: "the secret of happiness lay in renouncing the right to be happy." Acceptance of the tragic combined with searching self-examination and a keen sense of human dependence—this gives rise to the theological virtues of hope and charity. Lasch believed that these were also profoundly democratic virtues.

Hope is that "middling" form of belief in the possibility of amelioration, but it eschews the optimistic assumption that our efforts will always lead to clear and immediate success. At the same time, hope holds at bay the likely retreat into despair that apparently fruitless efforts can prompt. Hope curbs our impatience and frustration, lessens our sense of self-righteous expectation, moderates our insistence that all injustices be overcome immediately "though the world perish," while maintaining our belief that justice is a worthy civic mission. Hope allows us to believe that in the end the goodness of creation, and of the Creator, will solve the problems we ourselves could not solve. For Lasch, "hope without optimism" is the disposition necessary to achieving the "spiritual discipline against resentment":

> Hope is the rejection of envy and resentment and all that invites them. It's not difficult to see why those would always seem to be compelling moral postures, because we live in a world that doesn't seem arranged for human convenience. It's a world in which human happiness is not the overriding goal, and our plans go awry, and there are terrible limitations on what we can know and understand and control. And in any case our lives are very short. The fact of death is always there, haunting our imagination. All of which seems to justify a renunciation of any belief in the possibility that the world, in spite of these facts, is good, just, beautiful. None of this, of course, implies that this is the best of all possible worlds or that the struggle against injustice ought be suspended on the grounds that whatever is, is right.

Hope is the primary disposition of the "democratic realist": we share innumerable miseries together in the *saeculum,* with little expectation that we can exert control over the existence of sorrow and suffering—yet we hope, in the light of God's grace, for relief and final joy. Because of our shared condition of suffering, dependency, and weakness, democracy is the form of government most fully in accord with our condition. Democracy, so understood, arises out of mutual need, and finally points to the overarching necessity of a shared sense of democratic *caritas*, or charity.

Lasch's argument was counterintuitive by the standards of contemporary political discourse, in which "liberals" are more attendant to the sufferings of the weak, and "conservatives" are more likely to call for self-reliance and rugged individualism. Lasch embraced classically "conservative" arguments, with their stress on human limitation and their profound mistrust of the optimistic belief in progress, but he did so in order to ground securely a "liberal" sympathy for those most apt to be abandoned or overlooked. "Limits and hope"—this combination of concepts points to our condition of frailty and imperfection, and thereby exhorts us to be keenly attentive to the suffering and alienation all of us confront. Such attentiveness impels us to acts of generosity and charity. This "spiritual discipline against resentment" chastens our impatience with injustice precisely by emphasizing the necessity for love. This emphasis upon mercy was, Lasch concluded, perhaps the most difficult virtue for humans generally, and modern man especially, to sustain. And yet, he concluded, it was a message needing repetition and renewal, even in the face of likely failure. Hope demands nothing less.

For Lasch, history does not justify optimism; instead, it reminds us that mercy is both a challenge and a necessity: "In the history of civilization . . . vindictive gods give way to gods who show mercy as well and uphold the morality of loving your enemy. Such a morality has never achieved anything like general popularity, but it lives on, even in our own enlightened age, as a reminder both of our fallen state and of our surprising capacity for gratitude, remorse, and forgiveness, by means of which we now and then transcend it." FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bearing Up

I'd like your girl to sing, my dear. No date
decided yet, of course. I've made a call
on the vicar at St. James Without The Gate,
and we're pencilled in as "possible" for all
next week. We've oiled the lock, unstuck the door,
cleared the vault of leaves and swept the place.
Because there's been subsidence to the floor,
Grandfather's in some water at his base,
but Gerald's shelf is dry. Your daughter sings
a fine contralto, dear. Will she be free?

I've already made the sandwiches and things—
everything, of course, is piled on me—
and now our smaller freezer's fully packed.
Gerald's on stronger drugs and failing fast,
but courage, dear, is something he's never lacked.
I think each dose of morphine is his last,
then he revives and insists again, "No tears!"
Samantha's abroad. I've begged our eldest, Jake,
but fishing on the Kennet's the best for years,
and arrangements are so difficult to make.
We're church, of course, though Gerald's an atheist.
So may I cross your daughter off my list?

Oliver Murray

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Orwell for Christians

Paul J. Griffiths

George Orwell is probably not much read by American Christians. When he is (unavoidable doses of *Animal Farm* or *Nineteen Eighty-Four* at school, perhaps) it's not likely to be with the thought that his work might nourish a reader's Christian or American identity. This isn't surprising. Orwell had a vestigial affection for the rites and buildings of the Church of England but was otherwise opposed to almost everything about Christianity as he understood it, and especially to Catholicism. Among the many groups he considered the enemy and for which he had little but vituperation, Catholics and Americans figure largely, though usually separately. If you're an American Catholic, you can't read Orwell for the nostalgic Anglophiliac thrills you might get from Evelyn Waugh, or for the voyeuristic shudders you might hope for from Graham Greene. Instead, you'll get from Orwell insults for being crass, uncultured, violent, and imperialistic, and for being a member of a doctrinaire church closely allied to the principal fascist movements of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, Americans and serious Christians (including and perhaps especially Catholics) have much to learn from reading Orwell now.

"George Orwell" was the invention of Eric Blair, a "lower-upper-middle-class" Englishman as he liked to describe himself (the precision and the interest in the particulars of class definition are typical), who was born in 1903 and died young, from tuberculosis, in 1950. Blair transformed himself into Orwell in the early 1930s as part of his attempt to become a man who earned his bread by writing. It was a painful and difficult transformation, but by the mid-1930s Blair had effectively vanished into Orwell, who was much more than a pen name. And it is only as Orwell that Blair is now remembered.

Blair was born in India to a minor servant of the British Raj and a woman of French middle-class ancestry. He came to England with his mother and sister as a small boy, and was educated in the best preparatory and public schools (his public school was Eton, a fact of which he was not proud), but decided not to go to Oxford or Cambridge as would have been usual for someone with such a background. Instead, he joined the British Imperial Police in Burma, served there for five years, and returned to England in 1927, disgusted with empire and with his record as its servant, and determined to make a living as a writer. To this he devoted the rest of his life, and all his many other activities were subservient to it, undertaken usually to provide him with copy.

He fought for almost a year (1936-37) in the Spanish Civil War for the POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxista), a broadly Trotskyist group with anarchist elements, opposed by both the orthodox communist resistance to Franco, and, of course, by Franco's own quasi-fascist revolutionary party. He served in the Home Guard in England for several years during World War II, already by then a sick man; worked briefly for the BBC; and died at the age of forty-six. By the time of his death, he was a widely sought commentator on politics and literature, holding a unique place in the political life of that time as what he called a "democratic socialist," which meant, roughly, someone opposed to totalitarianism in all its forms (fascist and communist) and supportive of the oppressed against the oppressors wherever he found them.

So much for the life. It's the work and its afterlife that

Paul J. Griffiths *is Schmitt Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His latest book is* Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity *(Brazos Press).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

counts. In his decision to become a man who made his living by writing he was successful, but only just. In the twenty-one years between 1928 and 1949 he published nine substantial books (six novels and three works of reportage), a number of pamphlets and collections of essays, and a very large quantity of occasional journalism. This is a respectable but not a prodigious output. Assembled into the *Complete Works*, a scholarly edition completed only in 1998, the Orwell *oeuvre* fills twenty substantial volumes. But he was not a literary success during his lifetime. Most of his books sold modestly or worse, and he said of himself that throughout the 1930s he sweated to publish 150,000 words a year for an income of three pounds a week. This was barely sufficient to support a single man, perhaps the equivalent of about three hundred dollars a week in today's currency. Things began to change only during the last few years of his life, when his penultimate novel, *Animal Farm*, began to sell in large numbers, and his last one, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, promised to sell in still larger ones. He did not live to see prosperity.

If one does read (or reread) Orwell, one ought not to do so expecting great or even competent novels. The novels are, as novels, mostly bad and never better than mildly interesting. Orwell knew this, and often lamented his lack of skill as a novelist. The first four novels have Orwell-surrogates, barely disguised, as their protagonists, which shows his lack of interest in working to develop fictional character. They are clumsily plotted, sometimes so much so that they barely hang together. And they show undigested and incompatible literary influences (Joyce, Kipling, Maugham) whose yield is a mélange of prose styles often puzzlingly juxtaposed.

Burmese Days (1935), drawn from Orwell's years there, is a melodrama of empire's decay, featuring alcoholism, obsession, and suicide. *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1935) comprises scenes so disparate (country vicarage life, hop-picking in Kent, the desperation of the poor in London, the iniquities of English education) that Orwell scarcely seems to have bothered to stitch them together, and his efforts to do so leave embarrassingly visible seams. *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936) is an extended rant about class, money, and literature, drawing heavily from George Gissing and in every literary way inferior to its models; its protagonist, Gordon Comstock, is among the most unsympathetic literary figures ever created, and the little liveliness he has flows from the fact that his unpleasantnesses are very like Orwell's own. The best novel as a novel is *Coming Up For Air* (1939), which is coherently plotted, speaks in a single, affecting voice—that of a restless lower-middle-class insurance agent on the eve of World War II who attempts and fails to recover his lost, gold-

Books Discussed in This Essay

COMPLETE WORKS
By GEORGE ORWELL
Edited by PETER DAVISON,
with IAN ANGUS and SHEILA DAVISON
20 vols. Secker & Warburg.

INSIDE GEORGE ORWELL
By GORDON BOWKER
Palgrave Macmillan. 512 pp. $35.

WHY ORWELL MATTERS
By CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS
Basic Books. 208 pp. $24.

ORWELL
By SCOTT LUCAS
Haus Publishing. 176 pp. $15.99.

THE BETRAYAL OF DISSENT: BEYOND ORWELL, HITCHENS, AND THE NEW AMERICAN CENTURY
By SCOTT LUCAS
Pluto. 324 pp. $19.95 paper.

ORWELL: WINTRY CONSCIENCE OF A GENERATION
By JEFFREY MEYERS
Norton. 320 pp. $29.95.

ORWELL'S POLITICS
By JOHN NEWSINGER
Palgrave Macmillan. 190 pp. $23.95.

GEORGE ORWELL: THE POLITICS OF LITERARY REPUTATION
By JOHN RODDEN
Transaction Press. 478 pp. $29.95 paper.

SCENES FROM AN AFTERLIFE: THE LEGACY OF GEORGE ORWELL
By JOHN RODDEN
ISI Books. 350 pp. $25.

ORWELL: THE LIFE
By D. J. TAYLOR
Henry Holt. 480 pp. $30.

GEORGE ORWELL
By RAYMOND WILLIAMS
Viking Press
102 pp. $19 paper.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

en, pre–World War I childhood—and is a moving evocation of nostalgia, decay, loss, and anticipated totalitarian violence. And the last two novels, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, are, respectively, a fable and a tract, and thus not really novels at all.

So much for the novels. They're failures as such, but this doesn't mean they're not worth reading. Quite the contrary. They are often affecting, they contain much precise observation of the particulars of the lives of the poor and suffering, and they are often disturbingly direct in their rendering of illness, filth, decay, and death. They are driven, too, by anger that poverty is what it is (one of Orwell's best essays on this theme is called "How the Poor Die"), that violence is so common and so casual, and that the beauties of the natural order, to which Orwell was very alive, are so frequently and easily transformed into the smoldering slag-heaps of an industrial civilization. But these virtues are exactly those found in more concentrated form in the nonfiction: Orwell's first book, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), describes what it was like to live on nothing a year in those cities in the early 1930s; *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) reports on the condition of the working and unemployed poor in the industrialized cities of northern England; and *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) describes the experience of fighting in Spain. What Orwell does in these books, and in many essays and newspaper columns on similar topics, is what anthropologists came later to call "participant observation." His is not a theoretical analysis or a distanced description; it is a detailed and precise literary depiction of what he had himself seen and suffered while living with those about whom he wrote.

Recent works such as Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed* have Orwell as their principal tutelary deity; and it must be said that he does it much better than she, and better than just about anyone else who has attempted it since his time. Orwell's deepest scorn is reserved for those who theorize about these matters without observing them closely. In this camp he included what he liked to call, strikingly to contemporary ears, the "pansy left" (Spender, Auden, et al.), and the hardline Stalinist theorists who, as he saw it, offered a merely doctrinal analysis of the condition of the oppressed.

Orwell's principal literary role, then, is as an angrily prophetic and precise observer of the particulars of poverty and oppression. The novels should be read principally for this, as should the nonfiction. He came eventually, in "Why I Write" (1946), to advocate a prose that would be like a windowpane, a prose that would do nothing other than show to the reader what is there without embellishments that obscure—and, he came to think, *all* embellishments obscure. There is no such prose as this, of course, and even if there were, its writer would have to take care to arrange what it framed, which objects it would show; but the regulative idea that there should be such a prose had entirely salutary effects on Orwell's style. By the late 1930s he was writing with a clarity, unpretentiousness, and directness rarely matched in English since.

Observing the virtues of such prose is among the reasons Christians should read Orwell, for it is essential to Christian belief that there is an order of things, a way things are, and that both language and thought can approach, asymptotically, an accurate depiction of that order. Orwell's prose shows what happens if you take that conviction seriously. But this is not the most important lesson to be drawn by Christians from a rereading of Orwell. Much more important is what can be learned from his approach to politics, an approach that has been often misunderstood by his interpreters and about whose value and meaning there has been only conflict since his death.

Orwell's work has, since that early death, been successful and lucrative to a degree that he almost certainly did not anticipate and that would have made him acutely uneasy. All his nine major books remain in print in English, in both cheap paperback and expensive hardcover editions, and the last two have sold in the tens of millions and have been translated into dozens of languages, filmed (astonishingly badly, twice in the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*), and canonized as required reading for schoolchildren in England and the U.S. All his occasional work is now in print in the *Complete Works*, and goodly parts of it have been so since 1968, when a four-volume selection was published (it, too, remains in print). At least three of his essays have attained classic status and are widely anthologized: "A Hanging" (1931); "Shooting an Elephant" (1936); and "Politics and the English Language" (1946). A fourth essay, "Such, Such, Were the Joys" (written probably in 1947, but not published until 1968 because of libel worries) is less widely read but is generally acknowledged even by Orwell-haters (there are many) to be among the best things written on the horrors of the English educational system. The essay was written at the same time that Orwell was planning *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and most who read the essay and the book agree that life with Big Brother in Oceania sounds a lot better than life in St. Cyprian's prep school.

But the afterlife of Orwell's own work is only a small part of the story. Beginning before his death, and ebbing and flowing ever since, there has been a flood of secondary literature—biographies, studies, impassioned refutations, exposés, hagiographies, and so on.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One high-water mark of excitement was reached, naturally enough, in 1984; another was in 2003, for the centennial celebrations of Orwell's birth. Between 2000 and 2004 there appeared in English no fewer than four biographies, three full-dress (by Jeffrey Meyers, Gordon Bowker, and D. J. Taylor—Taylor's is much the best of these, penetrating in its literary analysis, lively in its prose, and interested neither in canonizing nor trashing its subject), and one polemical short life (by Scott Lucas). Also in the last five years there have been defenses of Orwell by Christopher Hitchens (*Why Orwell Matters*, 2002) and John Newsinger (*Orwell's Politics*, 1999), and, by Scott Lucas again, a hatchet job titled *Betrayal of Dissent*. There are also two very useful volumes by John Rodden of a more politically dispassionate sort which provide useful information about the struggles for Orwell's legacy. No doubt there's more that I've missed.

The first upshot of all this activity is that a great deal is now known about the details of Orwell's life in all its aspects and that probably not much more remains to be uncovered. If you read Meyers, Bowker, Taylor, and Lucas on the life, you'll know more about Orwell's psyche (self-tormenting), finances (always rocky, sometimes desperate), sexual interests (women, obsessively, but with special interest in prostitutes), carpentry (yes, carpentry, enthusiastically undertaken but badly executed), taste in clothes (hairy neckties, filthy tweed jackets), gastronomic preferences (puddings figure largely), obsessive fears (rats), olfactory likes and dislikes (fecal smells are an object of fascination), and ascetical tendencies (he'd choose physical hardship over physical comfort whenever possible) than likely even he could have told you. Orwell's is now among the best-documented twentieth-century literary lives. But the second upshot is that there is little agreement on how to interpret his work, and that the divisions about this have become more rancorous and impassioned with time, not less.

Most prominent among these divisions of opinion about Orwell's significance is that among socialists. For orthodox Marxists, and most especially for the supporters of Russian communism in the 1930s, Orwell was a traitor to the socialist cause, someone "objectively" (to use the Marxist cant of the period) supportive of fascism. This claim was first made in 1937, as soon as Orwell began to publish about the Spanish Civil War and has continued to be made until now. A peculiarly slippery and intense form of it can be seen in the treatment given to Orwell by the late British Marxist Raymond Williams in 1971, in a short and very widely read critical study; a more crass form of it is to hand in Scott Lucas' recent books. And the claim that Orwell was objectively pro-fascist was made and continues to be made even though Orwell himself was utterly consistent in opposing fascism in his writing and his life: he went to Spain to fight against Franco; he understood German and Italian fascism to be tyrannical in both theory and practice, and repeatedly argued that position in published work; and (at least from 1935 onwards) he advocated a reordering of English social and political life on socialist lines—his clearest statement about this is in "The Lion and the Unicorn" (1941).

But none of this cut any ice with the English or Spanish Stalinist left of the 1930s. For them, Orwell's exposé (in *Homage to Catalonia* and other essays of the period) of the divisions on the left in the Spanish conflict, and especially his critique of attempts by the Russian-sponsored Spanish communists to eliminate by violence other left-wing groups (including the Trotskyist POUM for which he had fought), sufficed to show his complicity with fascism. Orwell argued that if the Spanish left had not been so internecinely violent Franco could have been defeated; his opponents argued that anyone who criticized Russia (and Stalin) was thereby contributing to pan-European fascist victory by undermining the only force capable of defeating the European fascist powers.

Orwell's socialist opponents appealed to Marxist doctrine to criticize him, just as his supporters on the right after his death appealed to capitalist doctrine to claim him as their own. (The film version of *Animal Farm* was in part CIA-financed, and U.S. groups on the far right such as the John Birch Society were remorseless promoters of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*—these were allies and promoters whom Orwell would have found unbearable.) Orwell, by contrast, consistently refused to justify or oppose tyranny, totalitarianism, and political or economic oppression by appeal to doctrine. Indeed, he refused, for good reasons, to develop or deploy a systematic political doctrine of any sort. When he saw, in Barcelona in 1937, Spanish workers being shot by communists because they were (or were thought to be) Trotskyist or anarchist, he objected with indignation to what seemed to him a fundamental offense against human dignity and decency, an offense compounded by the fact that it was done in the name of a doctrine nominally supportive of those—the workers—being shot. The roots of Orwell's suspicion of systematic political and economic doctrines—"smelly little orthodoxies" he liked to call them, whether of right or left—lie in his Spanish experiences of 1936-37 and in the vilification by the European left that he consistently received for writing about them.

A similar nondoctrinal stance can be seen in Orwell's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

writings about the poor in England and France. He objects to the sufferings and indignities of miners in Wigan, factory-workers in Sheffield, hotel dishwashers in Paris, and the homeless in London because he thinks those sufferings offensive to human decency and evidence of profound injustice. He does not object to them on the basis of the Marxist view that such sufferings represent the decay of capitalism. For this view he had a scorn exceeded only by the scorn he directed at British middle- and upper-class blindness to the condition of the poor, and at attempts to justify poverty with the claim that the lower orders, being subhuman, do not suffer from deprivation in the same way that the upper classes would in similar situations.

Orwell had been inoculated against views of this latter sort by his time in Burma, where he had heard, ad nauseam, servants of the British empire make such claims about the Burmese. His discussion (in *Wigan Pier*) of the middle-class view that the lower orders smell, and not just because they don't wash, is of classic relevance here; it will raise echoes in American minds of home-grown racist rhetoric from the same period.

Orwell's fundamental critical vocabulary for objecting to human suffering is that of decency and justice; it is not a theorized or systematic vocabulary, and he consistently opposed attempts to turn it into one. Seeing why he refused theory will show why the Marxist critique of Orwell's socialism as romantic, nostalgic, individualist, and objectively pro-fascist has no purchase on him; it will also show why Christians ought to pay attention to Orwell, for Orwell's nondoctrinal denunciations of indecency and oppression deploy, often explicitly, three fundamental convictions, each of which resonates deeply with Christianity and certainly has something to teach Christians in thrall to over-theorized political convictions.

First, there is the conviction that there is a natural moral order whose fundamental contours are evident to those whose perceptions and consciences have not been malformed—or, as Orwell would prefer to say, to those whose ordinary decency is still in place. Second, there is the conviction that tyrannical oppression, whether of one by many, many by one, or many by many, is a paradigmatic offense against the natural moral order. Third, there is the conviction that a principal cause of the dissolution of ordinary decency is the deformation of language and thought to accord with the demands of a doctrinal system—with, that is, the attempt to ascend further up the ladder of theory than is appropriate to the case.

On the first conviction: Orwell thinks there is a natural moral order that obtains in the human sphere (social, economic, political, interpersonal) as well as in the nonhuman. Careful, precise description (prose like a windowpane) of phenomena in any of these orders will often show, Orwell thinks, which phenomena are as they should be and which are not; which are harmoniously ordered and which are more or less disordered. The modifier "often" in the preceding sentence is important. Although Orwell does not argue the point, all the examples he uses suggest that he expects appropriate reactions to careful depiction only in certain kinds of cases, most often those that involve evident violence or suffering. In such cases, theory is superfluous if vision is undistorted; and if vision is distorted, theory (doctrinal system) is both useless and dangerous. The kinds of cases he has in mind will become clearer if we consider some examples.

In a newspaper column written in 1940, Orwell recalled his first experience of Asia in 1922, when his ship docked at Colombo in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) as he was sailing to Burma to take up his police post. He wrote:

> The usual swarm of coolies had come aboard to deal with the luggage. Some policemen, including a white sergeant, were superintending them. One of the coolies had got hold of a long tin uniform-case and was carrying it so clumsily as to endanger people's heads. Someone cursed at him for his carelessness. The police sergeant looked round, saw what the man was doing, and caught him a terrific kick on the bottom that sent him staggering across the deck.

Orwell goes on to comment that the white onlookers approved, and that they did so because the person doing the kicking was white and the one being kicked was black. Orwell engages in no theoretical argument about the evils of racism. He simply depicts, and by depicting convicts of moral malformation, those who do not share his judgment that what he depicts is disordered and ought to be resisted.

A second example. In *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, Orwell describes his protagonist's reaction to a suggestion from the girl he has gotten pregnant that she might have an abortion, and that it can be done for only five pounds:

> That pulled him up. For the first time he grasped, with the only kind of knowledge that matters, what they were really talking about. The words "a baby" took on a new significance. They did not mean any longer a mere abstract disaster, they meant a bud of flesh, a bit of himself, down there in her belly, alive and growing. His eyes met hers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> They had a strange moment of sympathy such as they had never had before. For a moment he did feel that in some mysterious way they were one flesh. Though they were feet apart he felt as though they were joined together—as though some invisible living cord stretched from her entrails to his. He knew then that it was a dreadful thing they were contemplating—a blasphemy, if that word had any meaning.

As the nature of the phenomenon, the suggested abortion, becomes clear to Gordon Comstock, the novel's antihero, his response follows naturally and spontaneously. He sees clearly and reacts properly. No theory is needed. If he didn't see, argument about abortion's evils would be of no use.

A third example. In *Wigan Pier*, Orwell gives a lengthy (too long to quote) and vivid description of the poor scavenging for tiny pieces of coal on slag-heaps, desperate for combustible offscourings from the coalmines which they might use to heat their homes. The scavenging is dangerous, for it requires the jumping of trains bringing new slag to the heaps; loss of limb and sometimes life results. The picture is one of human beings dehumanized, maimed, and killed by economic necessity. It is also one of unredeemed and unredeemable ugliness, of a landscape despoiled and defiled.

This last point connects it to a fourth and final example. In *Coming Up For Air*, Orwell contrasts his protagonist's memories of the English countryside on the eve of the First World War with its reality on the eve of the Second. A favorite fishing-pool has become a rubbish dump full of tin cans; a stretch of the Thames that used to harbor herons and alders has become a wasteland of "rowing-boats, canoes, punts, motor-launches, full of young fools with next to nothing on, all of them screaming and shouting and most of them with a gramophone aboard."

Justificatory doctrinal arguments could be advanced in each of these cases. The coolie, it might be said, needs to be kicked in order that the benefits brought to Asia by the British Empire be maintained; and Orwell's thought about empire is subtle enough to recognize that it did bring benefits. The abortion might be needed in order that the hero be able to realize his dreams of becoming a poet without being forced into the clutches of the capitalist money-god by the necessities of supporting a wife and child (the novel ends with him doing just that). The inability of the poor to earn enough to heat their homes might be justified (by a Marxist) as a transitional phase in the decay of capitalism, or (by a capitalist) as a transitional phase in the process of industrialization, eventually to be remedied by improved technology. And the despoliation of the English countryside, it might be said, is incidental to the leisure needs of the new middle classes, needs that only an elitist would deny. But in Orwell's mind, these would be justifications that obscure what everybody really knows, which is that these things are wrong, revoltingly offensive to the natural order. Coolies are not there to be kicked; babies are not there to be killed; people are not there to be forced into near-starvation by industrialization; meadows and moorlands are not there to be turned into slag-heaps; and so on. The appeal to doctrine, to economic or political systems of thought, may blunt revulsion and disgust at these things; but it can do so only by deforming the consciences and perceptions of those who invoke such doctrines. Ordinary, decent people, Orwell thinks, know better, and they only cease to know better when corrupted by doctrinal systems.

So much for Orwell's first fundamental conviction. The second is that tyrannical oppression is a paradigmatic offense against the natural order. This is the subject of most of his work. He depicts economic tyranny in *Down and Out in Paris and London* and *Wigan Pier*, and, remorselessly, political tyranny in virtually every essay and book. *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are the classic documents, but the main themes are already there (though the rhetoric is very different) in *Burmese Days* and the early essays about empire. All Orwell's depictions of tyranny's systematic and theoretically justified violence—the policeman's boot on the coolie's behind, the hangings and beatings in colonial Burma, the shootings and bombings in Spain and later everywhere in Europe, the mass deportations, killings, and show trials in Stalin's Russia, the camps and the gas chambers in Hitler's Germany, the boot stamping on a human face forever—are in the service of this conviction. He does not propose a solution: to do so would require excursions into theory that, for the most part, he is opposed to taking. Rather, he depicts and is indignant. He intends that those who read his depictions will be likewise indignant; and, as he clearly understood, the greatest opposition to those depictions would come from people in thrall to systematic theoretical positions that had deformed them into justifying what he described.

Orwell's third fundamental conviction is that a principal cause of the dissolution of the ordinary decency that would permit clarity of vision and response to offenses against the natural order is the deformation of language and thought to accord with the demands of a doctrinal system. An essential document here is "Poli-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tics and the English Language," but almost equally important is the essay "Why I Write." Systems provide distance, thought Orwell, by means of a technical language that obscures the reality of what they pretend to discuss. Marxist doctrine justifies horrors by appeal to historical inevitability; Whiggish apologists for empire justify horrors by appeal to the white man's burden and (also) historical inevitability; the English middle classes justify economic horrors by appeal to a theorized and thoroughly ontologized understanding of the nature of the difference between social classes; and so on. All these theoretical positions (and Orwell, of course, includes Christianity among them) serve to avert the gaze from what is there, and a good index of the extent of such aversion can be found in the degree of abstraction with which social, political, and economic reality are described.

What Orwell offers by way of contrast to all this is a meliorist localism in politics and economics. Observe closely what's going on around you; pay attention to its particulars and try to understand why they are what they are; you will often know when something you see or have proposed to you is offensive to the natural order; when you know this, protest it, remove your cooperation from it, refuse to listen to those who offer theoretical justifications of it, and do what you can to prevent it from continuing. This won't, thinks Orwell, solve all political and economic problems. Some can only be addressed at the theoretical level, and there will always be disagreements at that level. But the mode of approach he advocated and practiced will, sometimes, provide a guide for political action, in our day as much as in his; and it will, more importantly, guard against the most seductive and dangerous political errors, most notably that of utopianism produced by excessive theorizing. In the kinds of cases that interest him, Orwell thinks that the clear eye can be sure that what is recommended is wrong—surer than the intellect can be of the upshot of any theoretical argument at a high level of abstraction. This conviction lies at the heart of an Orwellian epistemology. The proletariat, blessedly free of theory, are the repositories of vitality and hope, while the intellectual classes are sick, tempted always to atrocity.

It isn't necessary to endorse every element in Orwell's rejection of political theory in favor of human decency in order to see that he's saying something important. He doesn't mean that political theory is never necessary; he means that it should be modest, and that an important test of a particular polity's rightness is the extent to which the actions it requires or commends appear disgusting or indefensible to the untutored eye. This isn't an infallible test, but it is an important one, as can be seen by the care taken on the part of theorists-with-power, also known as politicians and statesmen, to obscure from the naïvely uncatechized the particulars of the horrors they think demanded by theory. Neither before nor for a long time after the fact did the U.S. government make clear to Americans the particulars of what was done at Hiroshima and Nagasaki; a good deal of trouble is taken in our present wars and adventures to prevent the uncatechized gaze from resting upon such particulars, too. And America is not alone in taking such care and in working hard to catechize its population away from disgust and toward advocacy. Orwell, it is true, tends to underestimate the pleasure taken by the naïve in spectacles of violence, torture, and obscenity; he also certainly underestimates the importance of some theorizing in opening the naïve eye to horrors it would not otherwise have seen. But he is nonetheless correct that the ordinary use of political theory and rhetoric, in the U.S. as much as anywhere else, is to make the obscenely violent seem acceptable. And he is right, as well, that this needs exposing by careful, precise, and cool acts of depiction.

Orwell's theoretically skeptical prophetic meliorism resonates with much in Christianity, and especially Catholicism. Catholics do think that there is a natural order, that its fundamentals are accessible to the naïve gaze, that these fundamentals include the profound impropriety of torture, oppression, tyranny, the killing of the innocent, and the despoliation of the natural order. Further, the Catholic Church has no political theory of its own; it does not identify any political order here below with the Kingdom of God; and it is (in its best moments) properly skeptical of the idea that we can do any better than local meliorism in politics. Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, for example, protests against utopianism and perfectionism in politics for reasons very like Orwell's. John Paul II's address to political and economic questions during the last quarter-century has also refused to identify any particular solution to the political question as the right one but has instead concentrated on identifying instances of offense against natural law and natural right that belong to particular polities. His critique of the offenses that belong to Marxist polities is too well known to need recapitulation, and Orwell would have endorsed most of it. Perhaps more in need of emphasis is his critique of the offenses that belong to democracies: unbridled consumerism, commodification, an understanding of rights that embraces a right to kill the defenseless, and so on. This, too, Orwell would have endorsed.

It remains to ask, then, why Orwell was so largely vituperative about Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular. The most basic reason is that he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thought Catholicism just another example of a doctrinal system that encouraged its adherents to excuse and perform horrible deeds. In his view Catholic doctrine, like Marxism, moves at a level of abstraction and pretended completeness that forces an aversion of the gaze from particulars and encourages the malformation of that gaze. He draws this parallel explicitly in *Wigan Pier*. In addition to this general objection, like most of his generation in Europe, he saw the Catholic Church as an ally of fascism and therefore complicitous with the very worst tyrannies. In Spain, for example, the Church supported Franco, in large part because of the violent anti-ecclesiasticism of his leftist opponents. This anti-ecclesiasticism included the burning of churches, the killing of priests, and the raping of nuns. Orwell was aware of this: he records instances of it in *Homage to Catalonia* in a dispassionate way. He did not endorse such atrocities, but he also did not think they excused support of fascism. I don't here offer any opinion about the rights and wrongs of the Spanish Church's support of Franco in the 1930s and afterwards. I note it only to identify one source of Orwell's hostility to the Church.

But along with this anti-Catholicism there is something else. Orwell's substantive judgments as to which actions are indefensible, which actions ought always to be resisted because they are indecent or unjust or oppressive, are very often in accord with those of Catholic doctrine. His conscience was, by Catholic standards, surprisingly well-formed: he saw the evils of abortion, contraception, oppression, tyranny, and poverty. But there is more yet: there are sometimes glimmers of empathy. In *Wigan Pier*, Orwell writes favorably of those English working-class homes in which you can see "the crucifix on the wall and the *Daily Worker* on the table." He likes this because it bespeaks a nondoctrinaire approach to both socialism and Catholicism: neither is taken to exclude the other, and each can be pressed into the service of resisting the unacceptable. As soon as either becomes doctrinaire, though, as Catholicism does in the "silly-cleverness" of the English Catholic apologists of the time (Orwell has Chesterton and Belloc in mind), and as socialism does in the polysyllable-chewing of the popular socialist orators of the time ("human barrel-organ[s] shooting propaganda at you by the hour," as Orwell calls them in *Coming Up For Air*), then the game is lost. Then evils are justified, even encouraged, in the name of the system: Catholics become apologists for Hitler (Orwell reviewed the English version of Karl Adam's *Spirit of Catholicism* in 1932, and although Adam was not then known in England as a Nazi sympathizer, the criticisms that Orwell made of the book show that he sees that trajectory in Adam's work); socialists become apologists for Stalin; and violence, torture, concentration camps, and mass extermination spread without limit.

Nondoctrinaire Catholicism, then, can be a force for good in Orwell's view. But there is more even than this. Orwell was deeply aware that the world in which he lived, the world of decaying and corrupting empire in Asia, of flourishing totalitarianisms in Europe, and of "sluttish" (a favorite word of his) commercial civilization in England and America, did not nurture the clear eye or the well-formed conscience. In 1935 he had the protagonist of *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* say that if you reject the corruptions of the money-god, of sluttish commercialism, then you have only three options: suicide, socialism, or Catholicism. And in 1949, a few months before he died, he wrote to a friend that "the problem of the world is this. Can we get men to behave decently to each other if they no longer believe in God?" He was by that time skeptical that the answer could be Yes. Of the three alternatives to sluttish commercialism he identified, socialism was the one he tried to embrace, but his version of it proved unacceptable to most socialists; Catholicism he could not manage; and suicide was, finally, the most attractive. He chose, against medical advice, to spend much of the last four years of his life on Jura, one of the most inhospitable of the Hebridean islands, to the detriment of his health (he was suffering from tuberculosis); and he worked himself to an earlier death than need have been his, again against medical advice.

Orwell is not a comfortable character to read or to read about. He was, from a Christian point of view, a self-tortured pagan whose moral vision was unusually clear. From a reading or rereading of him at the beginning of the third millennium Christians can learn how easy it is to justify atrocity by misplaced theory, whether in politics or in ethics. Many Christians in Europe in the 1930s and '40s (Catholics in Spain and Italy; Protestants and Catholics alike in Germany) permitted themselves to connive at or endorse atrocity because of the seductions of theory. Orwell reminds us of the first thing to do when you're faced with actions or recommendations to action that are *malum in se*: don't theorize; actively resist and speak out. He reminds us, too, that most of us have an uneasy grasp of theoretical argument, much more uneasy than our grasp upon our moral responses to what we are faced with. Can we, for example, be more sure that capitalism is a good than that sweatshop labor is an evil? More sure that national security requires preemptive war than that torturing prisoners is an evil? More sure that the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution requires

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that restrictions on abortion be illegal than that abortion is an evil? Orwell would say not, and he is right.

Orwell's opposition to theory in politics and economics is also a useful reminder of argument's extraordinarily limited capacities to convince anyone of anything, and in this he aligns himself (though he would not have known it) with that great Christian tradition of skepticism about this matter that runs from Augustine through Calvin, Pascal, and Newman. Newman once wrote: "When men understand what each other mean, they see, for the most part, that controversy is either superfluous or hopeless." This is a deeply Orwellian sentiment, and it is one that Christian apologists of the present ought to take to heart. Arguing with people whose consciences and perceptions are deeply malformed can do no good, for the difficulty isn't at the conceptual level. Argument about such matters as whether torture is always wrong, whether genocide is an acceptable instrument of foreign policy, whether state-authorized killing has justifications beyond the protection of the innocent, whether killing babies in utero is defensible and so on, is not only useless, however. It is also dangerous because it will typically seem to take seriously a corrupt standpoint. The virtue we can learn from Orwell is to see the power of language to depict and of thought to grasp the meaning of what is depicted, and to strive to use language in such a way that it more fully realizes that power.

This virtue is not much in evidence in American political or literary life today, and the passionate divisions among those on the left and right trying to expropriate Orwell for their own use almost all show precisely the kind of slavery to their own smelly little political orthodoxies that Orwell encouraged us to see through. If we can see through them with a clear eye, we will see what he saw, which is that the field of human history and human political effort is a potter's field, a field of blood. Every step we take is on ground saturated with the blood of the slaughtered. That has not changed since Orwell's time, and we can benefit from paying close attention to his central lesson, which is that a sure way to increase the flow of that blood is to think ourselves in possession of a sure and complete means to stanch it. To act on such a conviction is to sacrifice the present to an imaginary future, and it is among Orwell's principal virtues that he presses that truth upon us. It should not be a hard lesson for Christians to learn, for it is written into the text of our tradition, too. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

Contemptus Mundi

Father Joe:
The Man Who Saved My Soul
By Tony Hendra
Random House. 271 pp. $24.95.

Reviewed by Gregory Wolfe

Tony Hendra's *Father Joe* was given a front page review in the *New York Times Book Review* in which it was very nearly damned with shrill praise. The reviewer, Andrew Sullivan, a gay Catholic pundit, certainly did not damn the book in terms of sales—his review undoubtedly helped make the book a best-seller. But the review was so tendentious as to all but obscure both the spirit and the letter of the book itself. According to Sullivan's hyperventilating prose, Hendra's memoir strikes a blow against the "petty, ecclesiastically fixated pedants now so beloved by Rome." Four sentences later he adds, for good measure, that the sentiments uttered by the priest who is the eponymous subject of Hendra's memoir are "far removed from the cramped, fearful admonitions of today's Vatican."

Those readers who buy the book hoping for a biting screed against the Church à la Garry Wills or James Carroll are sure to be disappointed. For *Father Joe*, while it contains a few ideological crotchets here and there, is in fact a moving, often lyrical, spiritual autobiography. It is also a compelling portrait of a wise and holy monk, Dom Joseph Warrilow, a man of peace who was the still point of Tony Hendra's churning world for forty years.

Father Joe is a distinguished addition to the growing bookshelf of memoirs by prodigal sons and daughters, writers who chronicle their long journey home to the childhood faith they abandoned in search of liberation and fulfillment. The story gets off to a rollicking start. At fourteen years of age, Hendra befriends an eccentric Catholic couple who live in a trailer in the countryside outside of London. The husband is a convert, obsessed by apologetics, church history, and doctrine—something of a pious cold fish. His emotionally starved wife makes advances to young Hendra who, though a Catholic himself, finds himself unable to resist. One day, before things have progressed too far, the husband walks in on them while Hendra is in mid-grope.

Rather than informing the lad's parents, the husband determines on a more high-minded course of action. He takes Hendra to see a Benedictine monk of Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight for spiritual counseling. Ignorant of monks and monasteries, Hendra cowers in his

Gregory Wolfe *directs the graduate program in creative writing at Seattle Pacific University and is the editor of* Image.

Less time searching. More time reading.

Announcing a Convenient New Resource for the Serious Reader

Finally. A bookstore that features only the best titles on religion and public life. And it's only a mouse click away.

At the **FT BOOKSTORE**, you'll find books by First Things editors, contributors, friends, and a selection of fascinating titles recently reviewed in the journal.

Now locating the books that you want to read is as easy as going to our website, www.firstthings.com. Visit us today!

FT BOOKSTORE Your gateway to the best books at the best price.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

room in the guest house, awaiting some awful confrontation.

What happens next is unexpected. Rather than some lean, intense ascetic, the monk turns out to be an almost comical figure, like something out of a cartoon: large, floppy sandals, "big pink hands like rock lobsters sticking out from frayed black cuffs . . . gigantic ears, wings of gristle . . . long rubbery lips . . . stretched in the goofiest of grins." The monk gently ushers the protesting husband out of the room and shuts the door. In spite of the ungainly figure he cuts, there is something instantly soothing about the monk. "Gentleness and goodness come off him like aftershave."

When Hendra kneels for his confession, the monk insists that he sit, then takes the young man's hand in his and says: "Now, dear, tell me everything." After the boy gives a terrified but faithful recitation of the facts, there comes another surprise. Father Joe's first reaction is to murmur a word of concern for the wife. He then looks up and says:

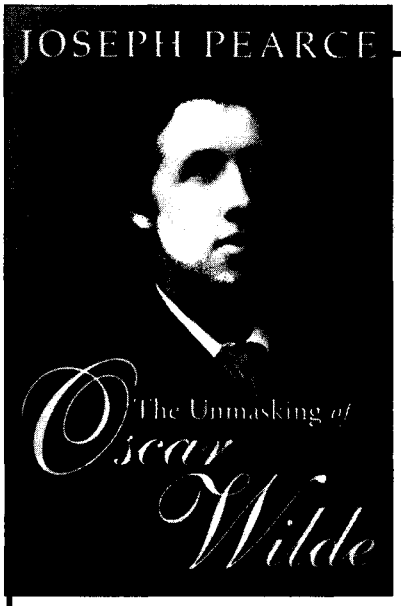
> You've done nothing truly wrong, Tony dear. God's love has brought you here before any real harm could be done. The only sin you've committed is the sin of . . . s-s-selfishness.

This strange blend of mercy and judgment and intimacy strikes the boy as fatherly. It signals the beginning of a beautiful relationship.

In his review, Sullivan seizes on Father Joe's response to the incident to pronounce the monk free of the Vatican's hang-ups about sexuality. To bolster his case, he cites another conversation with Hendra in which the monk says that sex is sacramental. Too many believers, Father Joe says, surround the subject with fear.

It's true that in Hendra's account, Father Joe occasionally seems to stray from the more traditional formulations of church teaching. At such moments his refrain becomes: "D-d-don't tell the Abbot!" Relishing this, Sullivan concludes that the only sin is when we "withdraw from God's love," something that happens apparently only when "Rome" hands down cramped admonitions and the guilt that accompanies them.

BUT SULLIVAN MISSES the point. What Hendra conveys so vividly (though implicitly) throughout the book is that Father Joe's ethic, far from being subjectivist, is based on a philosophy of *personalism*, an



THE UNMASKING *of* OSCAR WILDE

Joseph Pearce

Vilified by fellow Victorians for his sexuality and his dandyism, Oscar Wilde, the great poet, satirist and playwright, is hailed today, in some circles, as a "progressive" sexual liberator. But this is not how Wilde saw himself. His actions and pretensions did not bring him happiness and fulfillment. This study of Wilde's brilliant and tragic life goes beyond the mistakes that brought him notoriety in order to explore this emotional and spiritual search.

Unlike any other biography of Wilde, it strips away these pretensions to show the real man, his aspirations and desires. It uncovers how he was broken by his two-year prison sentence; it probes the deeper thinking behind masterpieces such as *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and "De Profundis"; and it traces his fascination with Catholicism through to his eleventh-hour conversion.

Published on the 150th anniversary of his birth, this biography removes the masks which have confused previous biographers and reveals the real Wilde beneath the surface. Once again, Joseph Pearce has written a profound, wide-ranging study with many original insights on a great literary figure.

400 pages, ISBN 1-58617-026-0, Sewn Hardcover, $19.95

"A BRILLIANT INTERPRETIVE BIOGRAPHY of a wit, bon vivant, and literary genius who still delights us a century after his death. In Joseph Pearce's sympathetic appraisal we never forget that Wilde was not just an entertainer but a soul that found himself only after ignominy, loss, and desolation. I have read many of the other books on Wilde, and this is my favorite."

— Ron Hansen,

New York Times Best-selling Author of *Mariette in Ecstasy*

ignatius press PO BOX 1339, FT. COLLINS, CO 80522
1-800-651-1531 - WWW.IGNATIUS.COM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

awareness of the obligations we have toward one another. The monk's personal presence is his most compelling trait; it not only makes him fully present to Hendra when they are together, but it is also grounded, as he makes clear, in a constant awareness of the presence of God as a person. In a conversation not quoted by Sullivan, he tells his young protégé that emotion is insufficient as a moral guide.

> Feelings are a great gift, but they're treacherous if that's all we live for. They drive us back into our selves, you see. What *I* want. What *I* feel. What *I* need. A man and a woman pass beyond just feelings at some point, don't they? That's when they start to know true love. The love of another.

There are times when Hendra himself seems to take "D-d-don't tell the Abbot!" a little too seriously, rather than seeing it as Father Joe's gracious way of steering him away from the superficiality of moralism toward the deeper truth of personalism.

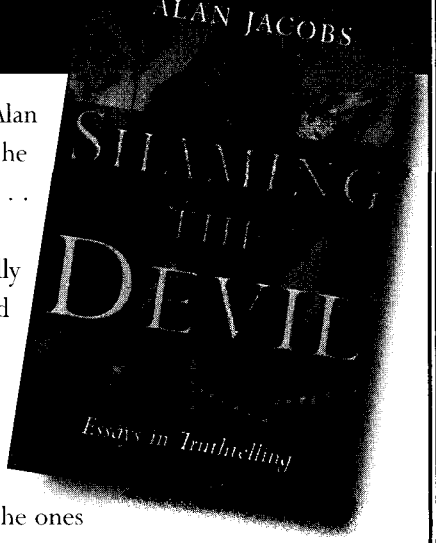
Indeed, while Hendra is relieved that he isn't on the receiving end of a moralistic sensibility, he ultimately goes off to indulge in it in his own way. After a period of puppy love for monasticism, in which he is convinced that he has a vocation to become a monk of Quarr Abbey, he gets caught up in the new irreverent comedy that he encounters when he begins attending Cambridge University. Acting on stage with the likes of John Cleese and Graham Chapman, future members of the Monty Python troupe, he discovers his true vocation: satire.

He goes on to become one of the founding editors of *National Lampoon*, editor of *Spy* magazine, writer of parody books like *Not the New York Times*, cocreator of the groundbreaking television satire *Spitting Images*. He even does a turn as "Ian Faith," manager of the band in Rob Reiner's classic mockumentary *This is Spinal Tap*.

Along the way, he does his share, and more, of sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll. A loveless marriage finally ends and a new one gets off to a rocky start. His visits to Quarr Abbey become more infrequent, although loving letters from Father Joe continue to reach him on a regular basis in New York and Los Angeles.

In the end, Hendra's self-described "precious mission to save the world through laughter" seems

SHAMING THE DEVIL
Essays in Truthtelling
ALAN JACOBS



"In these elegant and witty essays Alan Jacobs demonstrates yet again why he is our premier Christian moralist. . . . Readers of this book will find the wisdom necessary for living faithfully in the midst of the demonic — and often highly cultured — deceits of our time."
— RALPH C. WOOD

"Quick! Who are our best critics, the ones whose names on a contents page send a pleasant jolt of reliable anticipation? While you are thinking, I'll start the list with the indispensable Alan Jacobs, a writer with catholic interests and a skeptical, faithful intelligence."
— JOHN WILSON

"Jacobs's range of interests and the breadth of his reading is extraordinary. . . . His writing is also utterly free of ideological cant, and his reading even of those with whom he disagrees is marked by generosity, humor and humility."
— *PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*

ISBN 0-8028-4894-X · 247 pages · hardcover · $20.00

At your bookstore,
or call 800-253-7521
www.eerdmans.com

4553
WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

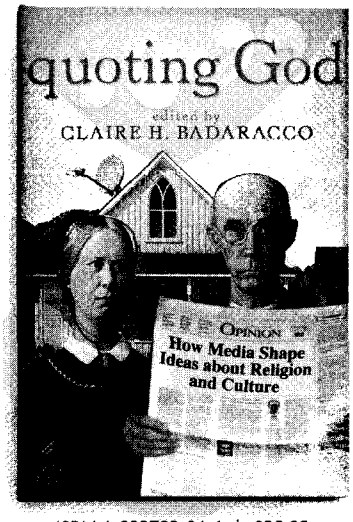
to end in failure. He allows himself to be drawn once again by the gravitational pull of Quarr. There Father Joe questions him about satire and its potential drawbacks: hurting and demonizing others. Hendra counters with the monastic concept of *contemptus mundi*, which he translates as "contempt for the world." But the monk corrects him: contempt "would imply arrogance, superiority, pride. . . . No, Tony dear, *contemptus mundi* means '*detachment* from the world,' seeing everything *sub specie aeternitatis*." When Hendra admits that satire thrives on an "us versus them" approach, Father Joe responds: "You see, dear—I think there are two types of people in the world. Those who divide the world up into two kinds of people . . . and those who don't."

Through three decades of absenting himself from the Catholic faith, Hendra has maintained his indispensable relationship with the cloistered monk ("the rock of my soul"), and in a middle-aged crisis in which Hendra can feel within himself nothing but "sheer unending malice" it is Father Joe who pulls him through ("I seem incapable of love, Father Joe." "Tony dear, you will only be able to love when you understand how much you are loved"). Helped out of his slough of despond, Hendra starts "back down the path of faith" at the end of the 1980s.

IRONICALLY, the famously left-wing Hendra returns to churchgoing only to find himself a conservative of sorts. His disgust at the devastation wrought by liturgical reformers knows no bounds. He declares them guilty of "one of our generation's most deadly flaws . . . a willful lack of any sense of history." The result is the moral equivalent of "genocide," the "posthumous mass murder" of centuries of tradition. In their quest for clarity and accessibility, the liturgical reformers had stripped the Mass of mystery.

> It didn't seem to have occurred to the well-meaning vandals who'd thrown out baby, bath, and bathwater that all ritual is a reaching out to the unknowable and can be accomplished only by the noncognitive: evocation, allusion, metaphor, incantation—the tools of the poet.

Nonetheless, he perseveres in his practice, saying the Hours of the



ISBN 1-932792-06-6 | $29.95
6 x 9, 325 pages | Paper

This rich and multi-faceted reader in religion and modern communications shows how the need to tell each other's stories affects the shapers and the shaped.

– KENNETH L WOODWARD
Contributing Editor, *Newsweek*

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY PRESS

Quoting God

How Media Shape Ideas about Religion and Culture

Foreword by John Dart

CLAIRE HOERTZ BADARACCO

Professor in the College of Communication, Marquette University

EXPLORES THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LIVED FAITH AND THE NEWS MEDIA

Quoting God charts the many ways in which media report religion news, how media use the quoted word to describe lived faith, and how media influence—and are influenced by—religious discourse and behavior in the public square. The volume intentionally brings together the work of academics, who study religion as a crucial factor in the construction of identity, and the work of professional journalists, who regularly report on religion in an age of instant and competitive news.

baylorpress.com | 1.800.710.3217

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

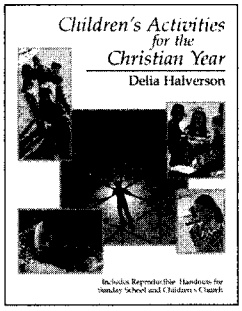
Divine Office and finding a home at Corpus Christi, the New York parish near Columbia University once frequented by Thomas Merton. The latest update he offers here on his faith is that it is "growing and maturing."

For all of Hendra's thoughtful reflection on issues as vast as the nature of faith and the ethical implications of satire, this reader, for one, felt that there were too many missed opportunities in this book—opportunities to make vital connections. Take politics. While Hendra treats a host of subjects as worthy of careful sifting, he takes his political stance as axiomatic. Reagan and Thatcher are simultaneously incompetent buffoons and satanically effective in undermining all that is just and good. And so on. But if his generation is guilty of murdering the past, might there be a link between that and the steady political erosion in recent decades of traditional morals and the institutions that enshrine them?

AND WHAT OF Father Joe himself? Human beings of his wisdom and grace are rare in any circumstances, even within religious communities. But just how much of an anomaly was he? The Catholic Church and the Benedictine rule formed him, made him what he was. Living saints may be passing few, but I would venture to say that few people who are open to the experience fail to find them. Nearly all of those who are writing memoirs of returning to a long-lost faith have their equivalents of Father Joe.

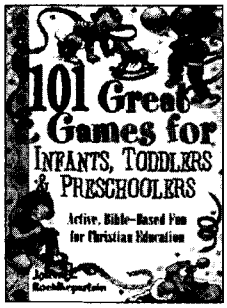
Though he never mentions him, Tony Hendra has much in common with another prodigal, a man born two generations before him: Malcolm Muggeridge. Both men felt an early attraction to religious faith, a Manichaean inner conflict between flesh and spirit, a difficulty with responsibility and commitment, and a genius for humor and satire. But Muggeridge and his contemporary Evelyn Waugh found a way to combine faith with satire, to great effect. *Father Joe* is a memoir, to be sure, but in the midst of his other obiter dicta on politics and humor, it would have been gratifying to see Hendra begin to forge a few more barbs tipped with a little *sub specie aeternitatis*, even if they were tossed from left of center. At the very least, we can hope that his next book will demonstrate that sort of synthesis. I bet even Father Joe would approve.

NEW
ACTIVITIES & GAMES That Give Your Children's Ministry a Boost!



Children's Activities for the Christian Year, *by Delia Halverson.* Useful, easy-to-use guidance, resources, and reproducible pages help Sunday school teachers and leaders of children's ministries interpret the meaning of the Christian year to children from preschool through elementary age. Each chapter includes: brief information about the season/celebration, its origin, and its meaning; an introduction to the symbols and colors of each season/celebration; learning activities such as art, writing, crafts, drama, stories, and music; reproducible pages including puzzles, litanies, songs, and readings; active games; and worship suggestions. *Abingdon Press.* CA5-0687352339. Paper, **$15.00**

Also by this author:
Side-by-Side: Families Learning and Living the Faith Together. CA5-0687049113. Paper, **$18.00**



101 Great Games for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers: Active, Bible-Based Fun for Christian Education, *by Jolene L. Roehlkepartain.* Young children learn best when they can move and play. Even babies can begin to discover God's Word and God's world through play. These 101 new games give young children the foundation they need in ways that are fun and exciting. You'll find 20 games designed for infants, 20 games for young toddlers, 20 games for older toddlers, 20 games for young preschoolers, and 21 games for older preschoolers. Each game includes a Scripture passage, a teaching point, a supervision tip, materials needed, and game instructions. *Abingdon Press.* CA5-068700814X. Paper, **$14.00**

Published by Abingdon Press
Cokesbury

Shop in-store, by phone, or online | Cokesbury.com | 1.800.672.1789

FSTP067601 PACP00255532-01

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The People's Court

THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES: POPULAR CONSTITUTIONALISM AND JUDICIAL REVIEW
By LARRY D. KRAMER
Oxford University Press
363 pp. $29.95.

Reviewed by James R. Stoner, Jr.

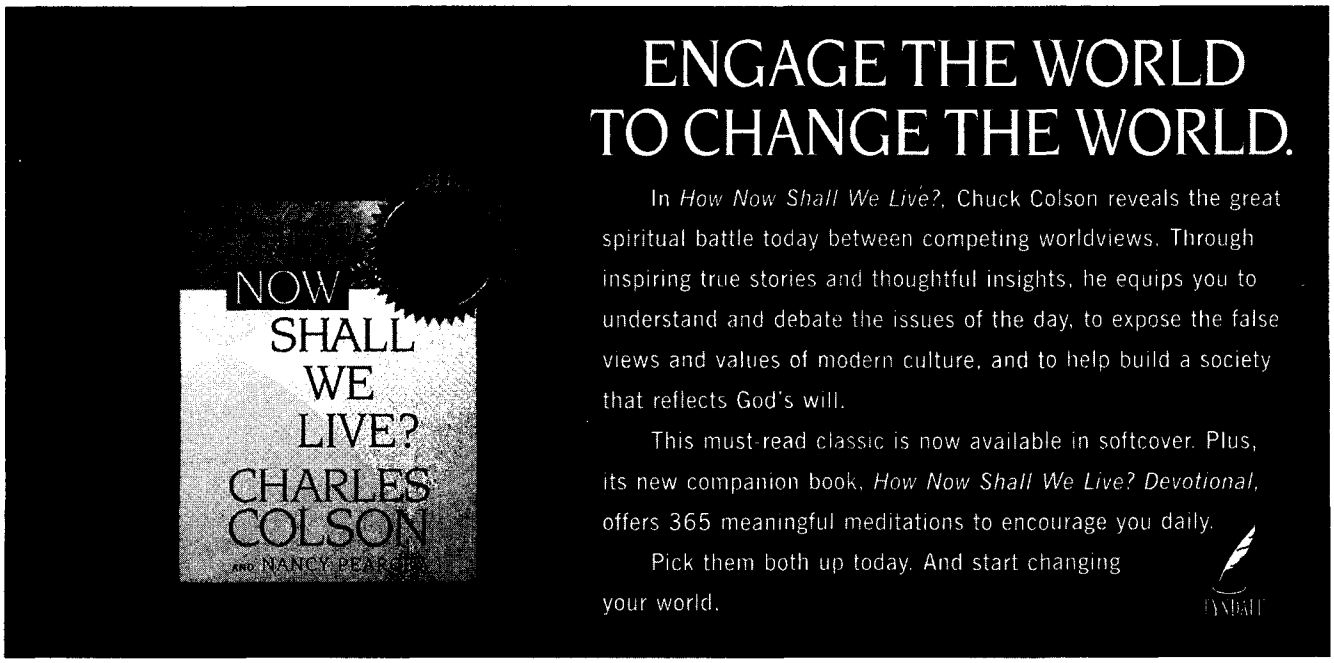
THE CONSTITUTION of the United States of America is a majestic old document, but in our age of legal realism the common wisdom is that judges do with it what they want. Naturally, then, the primordial public discussion of the Constitution, *The Federalist Papers*, has also come to seem superannuated, and its words to have lost their initial electric effect. We shrug at Alexander Hamilton's argument in Federalist 78 that in striking down acts of legislation as unconstitutional, courts are acting as agents of the people, enforcing the people's deliberate will, expressed in the Constitution, against the contrary will of their elected representatives or even against the momentary inclination of the people themselves.

The virtue of Larry Kramer's *The People Themselves* is that it jolts one into reading Hamilton's contention as literal truth. There really was an American people—an active and organized political community—that made the Constitution, and when judges enforced it by overturning laws, they thought they were vindicating that people, not applying their own theory of judging or of the Constitution. Professor of Law and Dean of Stanford Law School, Kramer has marshaled an impressive array of evidence and has made a thorough survey of modern scholarship to build his case for what he calls "popular constitutionalism" and against judicial supremacy. Judicial supremacy (as distinct from judicial review) is the idea, now widely taken for granted, that the Supreme Court is the sole authoritative interpreter of the Constitution.

By popular constitutionalism Kramer means an arrangement whereby the final arbiter of constitutional meaning is "the people themselves" acting through the elected branches of government. The supremacy of the people was the original understanding, and its replacement by judicial supremacy is at the root of the crisis of constitutional authority in our time.

The opening section of Kramer's book deserves great praise. Rarely since Edmund Burke's "Speech on Conciliation with America" in 1774 has the legal dimension of the American Revolution been understood with such precision and presented with such conviction. The colonists' view of fundamental law may seem confused to us today, familiar as we are with written constitutions, but Kramer shows it to be clear and coherent. Back then, fundamental law was not a written document but a customary constitution, resting on the consent of the governed. It provided "a framework for argument, in which historical accuracy was less important than analogical persuasiveness in maintaining over time an established balance between liberty and power despite new or changed circumstance." It was interpreted

JAMES R. STONER, JR. *is Professor of Political Science at Louisiana State University and author most recently of* Common-Law Liberty *(University Press of Kansas).*


NOW SHALL WE LIVE?
CHARLES COLSON
ENGAGE THE WORLD TO CHANGE THE WORLD.
In How Now Shall We Live?, Chuck Colson reveals the great spiritual battle today between competing worldviews. Through inspiring true stories and thoughtful insights, he equips you to understand and debate the issues of the day, to expose the false views and values of modern culture, and to help build a society that reflects God's will.
This must-read classic is now available in softcover. Plus, its new companion book, How Now Shall We Live? Devotional, offers 365 meaningful meditations to encourage you daily.
Pick them both up today. And start changing your world.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and enforced by the people through the whole range of political action available to colonial subjects, from legislation in colonial assemblies to mobbing in the streets. Precedent mattered when fundamental law was unwritten, for it carried the argument of custom, and so constitutional disputes were enlivened by a recognition that every decision now might be a precedent in the future, and that a false step might open up an erring path.

For all the snide remarks commonly made about "law office history," only a historian with a lawyer's eye like Kramer's could resolve the riddle of the Boston Tea Party, with its destruction of actual goods in the name of property rights. The colonists saw no alternative to destroying the tea on December 16, 1773, the nineteenth day after it arrived in Boston, because British laws against colonial re-exportation required either that it be offloaded within twenty days or that customs agents declare it forfeit, seize it, and collect the tax, setting a noxious precedent of unconstitutional payment. In Kramer's account of the old fundamental law, there was ample precedent for constitutional enforcement by a disciplined mob.

Kramer's description of the customary constitution is helpful, though not flawless, since the tonalities of natural law—as reality rather than as ideology—are outside his range. This keeps him from grasping the full depth of the unwritten constitution and its subtle relationship to emergent natural rights liberalism, and it leads him to quote or say silly things that might recommend popular constitutionalism to postmodernists but surely not to serious citizens, such as that "government requires make-believe."

Still, Kramer correctly sees that the Founders deliberately innovated in seeking to establish by their Constitution a written version of fundamental law, and he acknowledges that they were aware that one innovation might beget others as the implications of new choices became apparent. Judicial review of legislation is an example. It emerged in the 1780s as one of a number of institutional devices that allowed the enforcement of fundamental (now constitutional) law within the framework of republican government, rather than enforcement outside government by the mob as in monarchical times. In the first state cases, courts defended property rights against state legislative schemes to degrade the value of

Graduate School of Theology
AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY

Offering...

- Rigorous, speculative courses of study that enable students to deepen their linguistic, philosophical, and theological knowledge of the wisdom and scholarly relevance of Catholic magisterial and theological traditions, rooted in a life of prayer.
- **The M.A. in Theology**
- **The Ph.D. in Theology**
  with specializations in moral and systematic theology
- Scholarships and/or stipends for high-achieving applicants

EX CORDE ECCLESIAE
VERITATIS SPLENDOR
AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY

Now accepting applications for Fall 2005

For more information, contact:
Fr. Matthew L. Lamb
Dean, Graduate School of Theology
graduatetheology@avemaria.edu

AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY
1025 Commons Circle
Naples, FL 34119
877-283-8648
www.naples.avemaria.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

money or to confiscate estates. Some immediately viewed with suspicion this effort by judicial power to void unconstitutional legislation, but most eventually accepted the arrangement as serviceable, if circumscribed. It was supposed to vindicate, not replace, the active authority of the people in determining what the constitution is and what it means. The writings of "Publius" (Hamilton, Madison, and Jay) and of many others whom Kramer quotes make it clear that this was the ruling concept.

AS OTHERS HAVE NOTED, there is nevertheless tension in the American attempt to put fundamental law in writing and thus to incorporate it in ordinary law. On the one hand, fundamental law becomes less nebulous, more permanent, and more enforceable. On the other hand, the discourse of lawyers comes to form the constitutional vocabulary, and ordinary courts of justice get to determine what constitutions mean and how they are applied. Kramer shows how this practice developed and how it quickly spawned the opinion that not the people themselves but the courts of law and especially the Supreme Court of the United States are principal deciders of what the Constitution means. But he is too committed a partisan to explain the spread of judicial review with equanimity. The battle between the Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans is portrayed here as a contest between the forces of evil and the forces of good, and while Kramer is surely right to relate emergent constitutional doctrines to their political sources, his account is still tendentious.

He expounds the logic of what has come to be called departmentalism (the view that each branch has the final say about the meaning of the Constitution in matters within its purview) and he correctly states that popular constitutionalism's "essence was preserved by the departmental theory," since it kept the people authoritative over the Constitution through the elected branches. But in his rush to condemn the Federalists as the authors of judicial supremacy, he minimizes the overreaching of those Republicans who claimed that Congress' determination of the constitutionality of legislation is binding on the courts of law in all cases. He also sometimes misreads as supremacist Federalist complaints that were meant simply to counter Republican arguments of this sovereignty-of-parliament type.

Both Jeffersonian departmentalism and the circumscribed judicial attention to constitutionality defended by Chief Justice John Marshall are, Kramer knows, between these extremes. When he implies that concern about "the tyranny of the majority" was just a slogan when declared by the Federalists and is no more than a slogan today, he goes beyond Jefferson and Madison even at their most optimistic. Did these slaveholders ever forget for a moment that whole societies were capable of systematic wrong?

Once he gets beyond the demise of the Federalists, Kramer can be a bit more magnanimous about claims for judicial preponderance in the matter of reviewing legislation for its constitutionality. He gives a finely calibrated account of Madison's last writings on the subject (in the age of Jackson and Calhoun)—writings in which Madison recovers the temper he had shown in *The Federalist Papers* and admits that, "without losing sight . . . of the coordinate relations of the three departments to each other, it may always be expected that the judicial bench, when happily filled, will . . . most engage the respect and reliance of the public as the surest expositor of the Constitution." President Jackson's Bank Veto Message of 1832 also gets credit for revitalizing the tradition of popular constitutionalism, and Kramer nicely links this to Van Buren's theory behind the development of "the Democracy" as a political party that makes effective the will of the people against their persistent enemies.

Then Kramer races across more than a century-and-a-half of constitutional experience. He ignores Calhoun as a serious constitutional thinker, even though Calhoun was

The University of Dallas Department of Theology

INVITES APPLICATIONS for an entry level tenure track position in the area of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, beginning in the fall semester of 2005. Doctorate or ABD is required. The University Of Dallas is a Catholic university committed to the recovery and renewal of the Catholic heritage of liberal arts education and seeks candidates who have a familiarity with the Catholic intellectual tradition.

The candidate will teach courses on the undergraduate and graduate levels, including our introductory courses Understanding the Bible and Western Theological Tradition, and advanced level courses on the Pentateuch, Prophets, the Writings. The candidate should also be willing to teach some New Testament courses. Send a letter of application, CV, a sample of scholarly writing, and a one page essay describing scholarly interests and intellectual goals to: Professor Mark Lowery, University of Dallas, Department of Theology, 1845 E. Northgate Drive, Irving, TX 75062.

Three letters of recommendation should be sent directly to the same address. Deadline for applications is January 20, 2005.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

concerned precisely with the relation of the people to the Constitution. The *Dred Scott* decision he treats as a mere aberration even though Chief Justice Roger Taney, who wrote the Court's opinion, had also been the ghost author of Jackson's Veto Message. Lincoln's response to the *Dred Scott* case he treats as routine, without noting that judicial supremacy was now being defended by its former opponents in the Democratic Party. Finally, he gives an altogether conventional liberal summary of the Supreme Court in the Progressive era, as if the crisis of the Court in the 1930s merely restored the popular Constitution—when it really revolutionized our whole way of thinking about the Constitution. It is a measure of the effectiveness of Kramer's early chapters that the reader wants much more from him here.

IF KRAMER HAD stopped at 1840 he would have written a book impossible to dismiss. As it is, the book is indispensable as an account of popular constitutionalism in its early years, but the later chapters undercut his claim to offer an alternative to judicial supremacy here and now. It is not only that he dashes across the ages when resistance became civil war and judicial review became routine, when the courts became progressive and judicial supremacy came to be accepted by the people. Readers of this journal will also wonder how he can write the following sentence: "Outside the liberal academy and the ever shrinking liberal wing of the Democratic party, . . . it may simply be that no one thinks the Rehnquist Court is doing anything all that wrong."

Kramer does well to remind us that constitutionalism emerges through the action of political parties, and he knows the difference between disagreement with a specific decision and dissent from the proposition that the Supreme Court nonetheless has the final say. But in overlooking half the serious opposition to the Court on the contemporary scene, Kramer unwittingly shows why judicial supremacy holds trump in a bitterly partisan age. Constitutionalism succeeds when it is accepted as a way to transcend mere partisanship, which only the judges now claim to do. Whether the authority of the people over the Constitution can be restored—and whether there is still widespread consensus among the American people about the meaning and the goodness of their Constitution—are questions raised and left unanswered by this fascinating book.

The Age of Unenlightenment

Mapping the Evolution and Adaptation of Enlightened Thinking & Its Wreckage

A History of Putative Ideas & Hoaxes in Camouflage

By Eric Blair

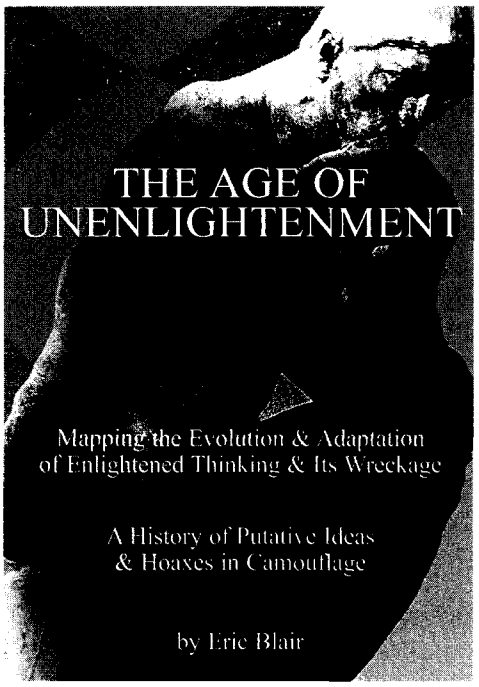
"A brilliant picture of exactly those forces at work in liberal assumptions, and the issues propagated by that thinking in our nation..."

– Trish Bozell, Senior Editor, Regnery Publishing

In order to see how we got where we are today, the first thing you need is a map of the evolution of "enlightened thinking." *The Age of Unenlightenment* lays out that map, bringing a currency of *context* to the marketplace of ideas.

The path leads through Washington and Lincoln, relativity and relativism, Darwin and Dead White Men, Shakespeare and deconstruction, socialism and Socrates, Orwell and Huxley, ecological panic and utopianism.

The Age of Unenlightenment tracks down enlightened ideas and ideologies through 200 years of Western intellectual history for the general reader.


THE AGE OF UNENLIGHTENMENT
Mapping the Evolution & Adaptation of Enlightened Thinking & Its Wreckage
A History of Putative Ideas & Hoaxes in Camouflage
by Eric Blair

$22.95 Hardcover: 0-9759038-0-2

To order, go to: www.unenlightenment.com

Or call: 1-800-877-2693

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

God Incarnate

LORD JESUS CHRIST: DEVOTION TO JESUS IN EARLIEST CHRISTIANITY
By LARRY HURTADO
Eerdmans. 746 pp. $55.

Reviewed by
David Vincent Meconi

DURING THE REIGN of the emperor Antoninus Pius in the middle of the second century, an unnamed Roman matron furtively became a Christian and not only left her old way of life behind but invited her husband to do the same. When this proved ineffectual, she decided to leave him and wrote up a *repudium*, a lawful bill of divorce. Her outraged husband went to the authorities and revealed his wife's new creed, whereupon she was arrested. He went on to denounce his wife's teacher in the faith, Ptolemaeus, who was also duly shackled.

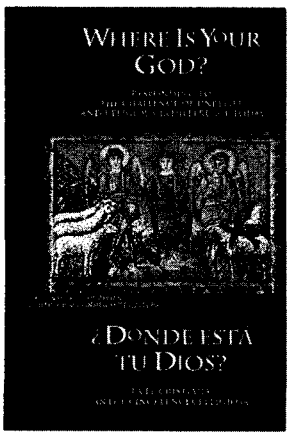
DAVID VINCENT MECONI, S.J. *is a member of Campion Hall at Oxford University and is currently working on issues of human divinization in the Latin Fathers.*

When asked if he bore the name of Jesus Christ, Ptolemaeus joyfully declared that he did and was condemned to execution. Seeing such a brutal, albeit "legal," injustice, a certain Lucius loudly denounced the cruelty of the Roman official, Urbicus. Turning to Lucius, Urbicus inquired whether he, too, was a Christian. Lucius' reply of "*Certissime*" earned him a place alongside Ptolemaeus in the executioner's chamber. When a third, unidentified onlooker also protested such treatment, he was ordered to join the others in martyrdom that day. Upon hearing of this chain of cruelty, Justin Martyr wrote his *Second Apology* to the Roman senate, protesting that Christians were maltreated for no other reason than because they bore the name of Christ.

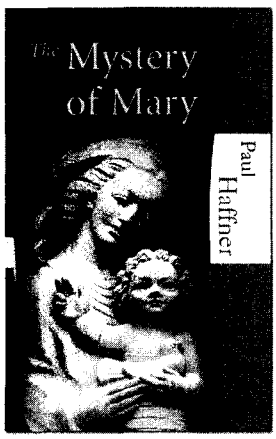
How did Christian allegiance become a matter of Roman law and, even more importantly, an offense for which one would joyfully die? Scripture lacks any clear and irrefutable equation of Jesus of Nazareth with the enfleshed Logos who partakes of the very nature of God the Father: even the confession of the apostle Thomas (in John 20:28), "My Lord, my God," would be interpreted by the heresiarch, Arius, as Thomas' thanking God for Jesus' return. So how did Christ's first disciples come to develop ways of defining and understanding his divinity, and how did the assurance of his divine nature develop so quickly?

IN *Lord Jesus Christ*, the University of Edinburgh's Larry Hurtado sets out to answer these questions, and his thorough examination of the primary texts and much of the scholarship surrounding the first two centuries of Christianity provides him with three main theses. First, he demonstrates that Christian devotion to Jesus was immediate and was intrinsically connected to his followers' communal conviction that he alone possessed the power to save. Hurtado makes it clear that Christianity had a fluid relationship with the cultures and religions of the empire, both shaping them and being influenced by them, but he argues that Christ's exalted status is neither a later development nor a borrowing from other cults around the Mediterranean. Unlike some current groups

LITURGY TRAINING PUBLICATIONS



1-56854-562-2 ■ Code: BWHERE **$13.95**



1-59525-008-5 ■ Code: HMYST **$27.95**

Where Is Your God? Responding to the Challenge of Unbelief and Religious Indifference Today

¿Dónde está tu Dios? La fe cristiana ante la increencia religiosa

CARDINAL PAUL POUPARD AND PONTIFICIUM CONCILIUM DE CULTURA ■ This bilingual book presents a pastoral analysis of unbelief and religious indifference, and a presentation of the new forms of religiosity in comparison with the Christian faith today. The author offers a series of concrete proposals for the dialogue with nonbelievers and a pastoral plan for the evangelization of cultures. ■ Paperback, 6 x 9, 112 pages

The Mystery of Mary

PAUL HAFFNER ■ Haffner offers a clear and structured overview of theology and doctrine concerning Mary set in a historical perspective. The reader will find here a sure and steady guide, faithful to tradition and offering a realistic perspective, not reducing the concrete aspects of Mary's gifts and privileges to mere symbols, yet not confusing doctrine and devotionalism. ■ Paperback, 6 x 9, 304 pages

At bookstores or Liturgy Training Publications:

PHONE: 800-933-1800
WEBSITE: WWW.LTP.ORG

Serving Catholic Liturgy for 40 years 1964 - 2004
LTP

5AFTD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of scholars, Hurtado is deeply sensitive to the first Christians' unique claim that Jesus was God incarnate.

Accordingly, his second argument is that Jesus stands as an unprecedented and unparalleled figure. Regardless of how he has been understood, such allegiance and constancy have been given to no other man in history. The third and most sustained argument that Hurtado presses throughout is that the first friends of Jesus came to develop a way of worshiping and speaking about the Son of Man in a way that avoided ditheism (the making of Jesus into another god alongside or subordinate to the Father).

Christ's perfect union of divinity and humanity is the central mystery of the Incarnation, and, as de Lubac pointed out a generation ago, the abjuring of this paradox marked the heretics of the early Church, not her faithful adherents: the Adoptionists and Docetists were the ones who refused to live with the ultimate inscrutability of the God-Man. The believing Church, by contrast, looked for the most fitting and faithful way to express this paradox. That is, as inheritors of the old covenant, Christians sought to demonstrate the reasonableness of only one divine and eternal being, while as initiates into the life of Jesus, they also sought to show how Christ's glory consummates God's action *ad extra* and reveals the triune nature of God in a way that never puts monotheism at risk.

To make these points, Hurtado proceeds by way of the textual, the historical, and the creedal. The first seven of his ten chapters are given over to close textual studies. Hurtado opens by treating the "religious environment" of Jesus' day and then proceeds to examine the Pauline evidence of Christ's messiahship, the commonality of the Synoptic Gospels with the Gospel of John, and then the other early "Jesus books" (as the noncanonical accounts of Christ's life are called). The goal here is to show how Jesus received a soteriological importance without precedent. As Hurtado puts it, "Overall, we get the impression of a remarkably well-established pattern of prayer in which Jesus figures very prominently, either as a recipient or as unique agent through whom prayer is offered. Moreover, there is simply no analogy in Roman-era Jewish groups for the characteristic linking of Jesus with God in the prayer practice reflected in Paul's letters."

Similarly, the Gospels reveal a soteriological consistency in which Jesus is presented not only as an eschatological instrument but as salvation itself (e.g., John 14:6). Hurtado is excellent at guiding the reader through the subtle differences between the Gospels on this point as well as at showing how the devotion to Jesus presented there is strongly paralleled in such extrabiblical writings as *The Protoevangelium of James*, *The Gospel of Peter*, and *The Gospel of Thomas*.

An historical overview of the second century is given in Chapter 8, and the emphasis here is on Christianity's struggle to understand its Jewish roots as it finds itself being more and more structured by the ethos and the religious expressions of gentile converts. The proven success and new distinctiveness of Christianity at the turn of the first century prompted not only attacks by the empire's literati but also an orchestrated apologetic effort on the Church's behalf. The anonymous Letter to the Hebrews captures this emergence from a new Jewish sect to a developed and distinctive creed, and Hurtado explicates the main points of each section of that letter before turning to the later Pauline epistles as well as the "pastoral letters" of Timothy and Titus.

MERE CHRISTIANITY FORUM, INC.

mere christianity forum • vista house

Mere Christianity Forum, Inc. a non-profit corporation founded in Greenville, South Carolina, exists to thoughtfully explore Christian faith and promote the human person in all activities. By relying upon nationally renowned thinkers, as well as the students and professors of Furman University, Mere Christianity Forum challenges participants to seek a thoughtful, vibrant Christian faith by hosting forums on topics related to faith, thought, and culture. **Vista House**, a four bedroom center on nine acres of land, extends the work of the Mere Christianity Forum by providing a venue for study, dialogue, artistic and creative endeavor, and ecumenical Christian community. In addition to dining and study facilities, Vista House serves as an art gallery, library, and home to select Furman University students and recent graduates living in an intentional Christian community.

Appointments

Executive Director

Mere Christianity Forum, Inc. invites applications and nominations for the full-time position of Executive Director. The Executive Director has responsibility for preserving and extending the vision of Mere Christianity Forum; overseeing and scheduling the use of Vista House facilities; coordinating the programming of the Mere Christianity Forum; directing strategic budgeting and financial management; and fundraising, promoting, and expanding the influence of Mere Christianity Forum, Inc. in the local, regional, and national communities.

The successful candidate will: Hold a Bachelor's degree; have a proven track record of administrative experience; have strong organizational, verbal, written, and interpersonal skills; have the ability to coordinate diverse program experiences; possess creativity in envisioning and developing new and innovative programming; have a commitment to Christian faith; have an interest in culture and authentic human development; have the ability to manage several projects simultaneously; and be computer literate and familiar with word-processing, spreadsheet and database programs.

Please send a letter of introduction and resume either via email or mailing address.
Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled.
MCF, Inc. does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or qualified disability.
For further information on MCF, Inc. and available appointments please contact us at (864) 834-2228 or by email.
Mere Christianity Forum, Inc. 5000 Old Buncombe Rd, Suite 27-158 Greenville, SC 29617 *hr@merechristianityforum.com*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The final two chapters take up creedal questions, examining what Hurtado calls "radical diversity" and the "proto-orthodox" tendencies both inside and outside the early Church. As Christians began to formulate what their newly found faith meant, they discovered that some expressions and images corresponded with their growing "rule of faith" and others fell outside of what was doctrinally acceptable. The major struggle here was to preserve Christ's divine humanity against docetic and gnostic tendencies. The errors of Valentinus and Marcion are thus exposed before Hurtado analyzes other influential texts, both biblical and extrabiblical, which express Christ's godliness: The Book of Revelation, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, and *The Shepherd of Hermas*.

FACULTY NEEDED:
Are you eager to unleash the power of a Christian liberal arts education on a society in transition? Openings in various academic disciplines.

Our faculty play a vital role in preparing students from the former Soviet Union to take the lead in revitalizing business, politics, education and the church.

Are you ready to take your teaching a step further?

lithuania christian college
TRANSFORMING STUDENTS ::::: TRANSFORMING SOCIETY

www.lccbc.org
faculty@lccbc.org
604.851.0151

This is a fine and hefty tome. Hurtado's attention to the many Christian currents flowing into the second century is superb. Perhaps it is because one finds so much here that one looks for more. There are two additional areas that could have been better developed: communal worship and episcopal authority. First, the sacramental structure of the Church is indispensable to understanding the development of Christianity. Devotion to Christ was made possible because the early Church understood how the sacraments effected his continued presence on earth. Baptism and Eucharist occupy central places in, for instance, the letters of Ignatius and the *apologiae* of Justin, as well as in the *Didache*.

Second, Hurtado reduces the "mono-episcopacy" to a footnote and simply refers the reader to an encyclopedia entry. Closer attention, however, should have been paid to the question of why men like Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna labored unceasingly to foster and preserve Christian allegiance to Christ's ecclesial representatives on earth. For the first centuries of Christianity, one's devotion to Christ was, in a large part, measured by one's devotion to the bishop.

Hurtado approaches the early Church with an integrity and thoroughness that should be a model for historians and theologians working in this area, where hard evidence is sparse and key terms are often ambiguous. Perhaps he relies too much on twentieth-century Anglo-American scholarship, but his work will prove helpful for any reader interested in the first two centuries of Christianity, particularly in the question of how unwavering devotion to the divine person of Jesus so rapidly became a *sine qua non* of the first believers' lives. His writing is uncomplicated and illuminating, and his sensibilities are evangelical in the best sense of the term.

Zealous for Perfection

JOHN WESLEY: A BIOGRAPHY
By STEPHEN TOMKINS
Eerdmans. 208 pp. $20.

Reviewed by Edward T. Oakes

JOHN WESLEY (1703-1791), the founder of Methodism, proves to be a biographer's dream come true. The man was a bundle of contradictions—and what biographer does not love to portray a human life torn asunder from within, thrashing about on the stage of history? As Stephen Tomkins explains at the conclusion of his almost novelistic biography, Wesley fascinates because he embodied so many of the conflicts of his age and fused them into a life of remarkable achievement:

> He combined a Catholic devotion to the sacraments of the Church with a Pentecostal welcoming of healings, ecstasies and Low Church spontaneity. He had an evangelical horror of trying to satisfy God by good works, but an even greater horror of trying to satisfy God without good works. He was a founding father of evangelicalism, but for his last twenty years, he consistently retreated from its stark certainties.

But Wesley's contradictions were more than theological; they were personal too, especially in his relations with women. After nearly marrying twice (and leaving both women feeling jilted), Wesley eventually married Molly Vazeille, a widow of French Huguenot descent with four children of her own. The marriage was not happy—indeed,

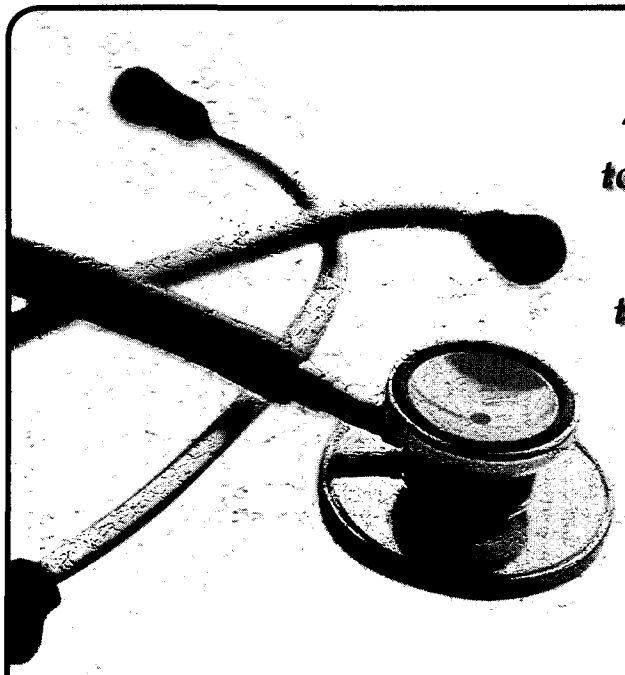
EDWARD T. OAKES, S. J. *is co-editor, with David Moss, of* The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the spouses proved scarcely able to tolerate each other. When Wesley, at a Methodist conference in Bristol, got word that his wife was dangerously ill, he headed back to their London home. Arriving at their apartment at the ungodly hour of one o'clock the following morning, he discovered that her fever had abated—and he turned around and headed back to Bristol an hour later.

When Wesley suspected his wife of reading his private mail, he had his desk outfitted with a secret compartment in which to hide his sensitive papers from her. These presumably must have included portions of his famous *Journal*, for in one bitter letter to her he explained that his indictment of her character was incomplete because he did not have his journal with him at the moment: "I have therefore only my memory to depend on; and that is not very retentive of evil." No surprise, then, that he did not attend her funeral, and of her own legacy of five thousand pounds (holdings from her first husband, a wealthy merchant), she bequeathed to him only a ring.

Tomkins does, however, absolve Wesley of the charge of adultery, a charge hurled at him by none other than his ultra-suspicious wife. But while always faithful to his marriage vows, Wesley, as his biographer freely admits, "suffered from a failure to discern between the romantic and pastoral, which blighted his



". . . as you ought not to attempt to cure the eyes without the head or the head without the eyes, so neither ought you to attempt to cure the body without the soul."

— Plato
from *Charmides*

"Studying the art of medicine without an understanding of human nature is much like building a house without blueprints."

—Francis J. Milligan, M.D.
Family Physician • Class of 1985

For 33 years, young men and women from around the country and abroad have been coming to Thomas Aquinas College in pursuit of Truth and Wisdom.

In small seminars, they analyze and discuss the great books, seeking to discover the truth through the original writings of the greatest thinkers of Western Civilization.

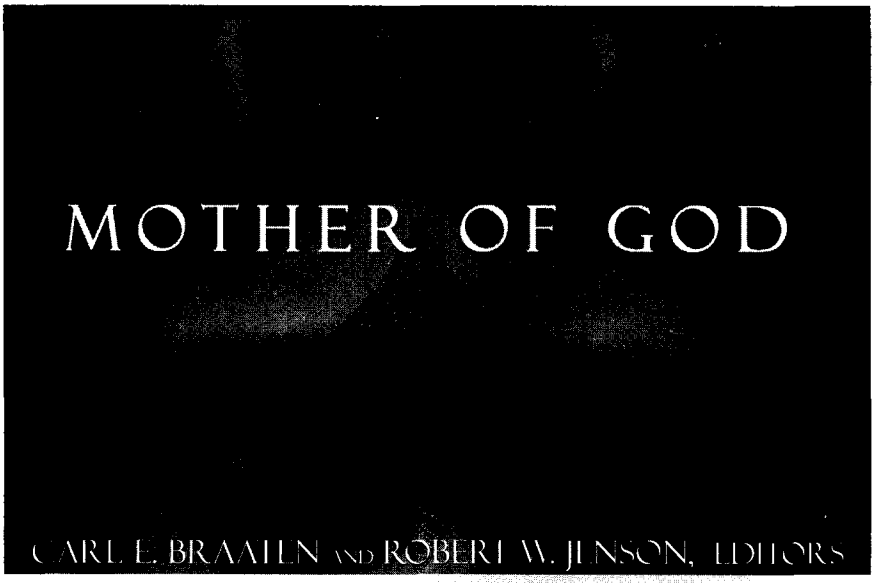
Enlightened by the wisdom of the Church, guided by the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, and nourished by a rich sacramental life, students at Thomas Aquinas College begin to know the world, mankind and the God Who made them.

THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

800 • 634 • 9797
www.thomasaquinas.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

romances and cast a shadow over his pastoring." This was a blind spot that afflicted more than one early Methodist preacher. Perhaps the most disastrous of these philandering clerics was Westley Hall, one of Wesley's first converts while they were both students at Oxford. Auspiciously enough, Hall married Wesley's sister Martha; but then, after a string of seductions among his flock, he began to preach a gospel of polygamous deism and finally deserted Martha after most of her ten children had died, fleeing to the West Indies with another woman.



"A powerful invitation to think anew about the meaning of Mary, the mother of Jesus, for Christian faith and practice, and even to relate to her personally with new depth. . . . A fine example of theology written for both heart and mind."
— BRIAN E. DALEY, S.J.

"A notable contribution to the literature of the new interest in Mary. It combines impeccable scholarship with general accessibility, and it deserves a wide circulation."
— JOHN MACQUARRIE

"Eight authors show that it is possible in the Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Baptist traditions to see Mary as a unifying figure who brings their often discordant voices into harmony. This book makes an excellent contribution to the ecumenical dialogue on Christ and his mother."
— GEORGE H. TAVARD

CONTRIBUTORS
Carl E. Braaten, Lawrence S. Cunningham, Kyriaki Karidoyanes FitzGerald, Beverly Roberts Gaventa, Timothy George, Robert W. Jenson, Jaroslav Pelikan, David S. Yeago

ISBN 0-8028-2266-5 • 131 pages • paperback • $16.00

At your bookstore, or call 800-253-7521
www.eerdmans.com

4533 WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

ACCORDING TO THE famous twentieth-century Catholic writer, Ronald Knox, the real problem here was "enthusiasm." But Tomkins shows that such an interpretation goes too far. The real problem was that legitimate religious enthusiasm had become too bottled up by the established church. The author recounts the rather amusing tale of one budding Quaker who quit the Church of England because, when he approached various curates and vicars about his oppressive sense of sin, he was told to go see a doctor. Such anodyne advice was clearly not for Wesley, who advocated what he called "heart-religion," meaning "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." For Wesley, these fruits of the spirit must be *felt*, or else they have no being, and when excluded from the devout life religion becomes but a "dry, dead carcass."

All well and good, and no one doubts that the enthusiasm that greeted Wesley's sermons owed at least something to the starved condition of souls planted in the fallow soil of a desiccated, established Christianity. Unfortunately, enthusiasm sometimes bursts its own bounds, especially when sexual energy gets commingled with spiritual fervor. But of the authenticity of the fervor, both in Wesley and in most Methodists, there can be no doubt. "At fairly sober estimates," Tomkins writes, Wesley "rode 250,000 miles, gave away 30,000 pounds, . . . and preached more than 40,000 sermons," while the published version of his *Journal* ran to over twenty volumes. Moreover, under his influence England became, in all its classes and throughout the land, a thoroughly Christian nation, so much so that nonconformists grew from six percent of churchgoers in Wesley's youth to over 45 percent by 1851.

Most remarkably, much of this growth came from the zeal of just this one man, and yet Wesley never

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seems to have attained the inner peace that was the goal of his entire adult life. In perhaps the most astonishing passage in this riveting book, Tomkins quotes John writing to his brother Charles in these stark words: "I do not love God. I never did. Therefore I never believed, in the Christian sense of the word. Therefore I am only an honest heathen." But unlike similar-sounding crises of faith in later times, this did not cause Wesley to despair of his mission: "And yet I dare not preach otherwise than I do, either concerning faith, or love, or justification, or perfection . . . I want all the world to come to what I do not know."

Without quite saying so explicitly, Tomkins implies that Wesley's dilemma, expressed so poignantly here, came from an unresolved tension located in the Christian religion itself, above all in the still unresolved inter-

AQUINAS
THE AUGUSTINIAN

February 3–5, 2005
Ave Maria University
Naples, Florida

Join us for this exciting conference!

John Rist, *Keynote Speaker*
Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Closing Speaker*

Also featuring:
Michel Barnes
Johannes Brachtendorff
Stephen F. Brown
Sarah Byers
Michael Dauphinais
Barry David
Robert Dodaro, OSA
Gilles Emery, OP
Harm Goris
Wayne Hankey
Reinhard Hütter
Mark Johnson
Matthew L. Lamb
Matthew Levering
Jody Vaccaro Lewis
Guy Mansini, OSB
Bruce Marshall
John O'Callaghan
Thomas Osborne
R. Trent Pomplun
Tracey Rowland
Michael Sherwin, OP
Jeremy Wilkins

Registration Fee for Conference Sessions $100

Students/Seminarians/Religious $30

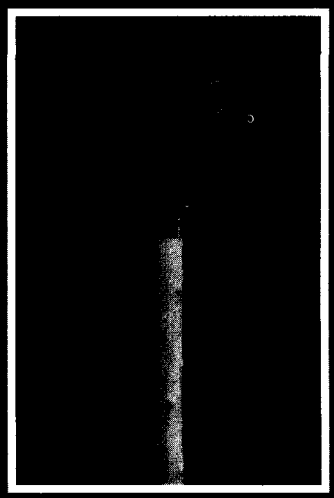
Saturday Evening Banquet $50
(February 5)

For more information or to register:
Visit our website at
www.aquinas.avemaria.edu,
call (239) 280-2550, or email
matthew.levering@avemaria.edu.

Sponsored by

THE AQUINAS CENTER FOR THEOLOGICAL RENEWAL AND THE GRADUATE DEPARTMENT IN THEOLOGY AT AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY
1025 Commons Circle
Naples, Florida 34119

THE
WYSONG
COMPANY INC.
ART AND DESIGN
IN THE SPIRIT OF WORSHIP®



CROSIER. BITTER ORANGE WOOD STAFF WITH A BRONZE VOLUTE.

LITURGICAL CONSULTATION AND DESIGN.
PAINTING, SCULPTURE AND STAINED GLASS.
FINE FURNISHINGS AND APPOINTMENTS.
MURALS AND MOSAICS.
TEMPORARY INSTALLATIONS.

(212) 995-1775
448 EAST 20TH STREET 7A
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10009

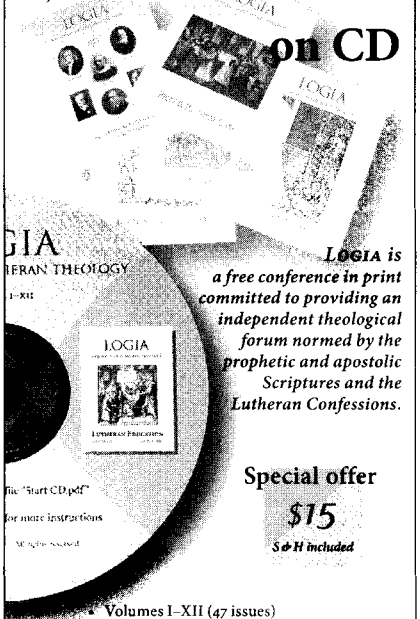
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pretation of the letters of St. Paul regarding justification and sanctification. While fully admitting that salvation is pure gift (in fact his early preaching was entirely premised on this foundational Reformation doctrine), Wesley also knew that static, untransforming faith was valueless; and so he came to advocate his most distinctive doctrine, claiming—against St. Augustine, Luther, and Calvin—that perfect holiness can be attained in this life. But with such an ideal in mind, dissension was bound to arise within the Methodist ranks between those who claimed such perfection and those who were all too aware of their ongoing sinfulness.

The irony of this dilemma is easy to picture, and Tomkins captures it well: "The immoderately perfect condemned ordinary Methodists as thoroughly as the Methodists condemned the 'almost Christians' of the Church of England, and complained of persecution from the ordinary Methodists as the ordinary Methodists did from the unregenerate Anglicans." To make matters worse, preachers soon sprang up who began to claim that "a believer till perfect is under the curse of God and in a state of damnation." Wesley rejected this teaching, but as Tomkins says, "he did not distance himself very much from it." How could he? For the doctrine of perfect holiness had finally become both the wellspring and the goal of his apostolic zeal, the one doctrine that could resolve all his personal and theological tensions: "The *conquest* of sin, and not just its *forgiveness*, was what he most hoped for from his evangelical conversion." Faith, Wesley said, was the door of religion; holiness was "religion itself."

St. Augustine often insisted on the ineluctable sinfulness of Christians, no matter how seemingly perfect they might be. To him innate, incorrigible imperfection was one of the legacies of Adam's sin. Original sin, he said, turned the human heart into a *fomes peccati* (tinderbox or powder keg of sin), operative at all times, even in the regenerate. This teaching Wesley seems never to have taken to heart, although the experience of his flock often told him of it, especially when those supposedly "perfect" saints later returned to their previous lives: "Formerly we thought," wrote Wesley, "one saved from sin could not fall; now we know the contrary. We are surrounded with instances of those who lately experienced all that I mean by perfect. They had both the fruit of the Spirit, and the witness; but they now lost both."

LOGIA
A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY



LOGIA is a free conference in print committed to providing an independent theological forum normed by the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

Special offer
$15
S&H included

- Volumes I–XII (47 issues)
- PDF for PC or Mac
- Colored for better screen viewing
- Linked—including endnotes—and bookmarked
- Indexed for simple and advanced searches

To order, include name, address, phone number and payment by check, money order or Visa/MasterCard.

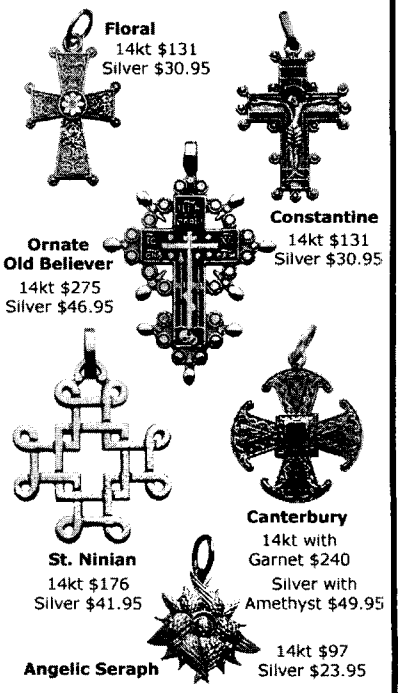
Phone ✣ 605-887-3145
E-mail ✣ logia2@nvc.net
Fax ✣ 605-887-3129
Mail ✣ 15825 373rd Ave., Northville, SD 57465

HOW TO PUT FIRST THINGS IN YOUR WILL

After providing for their families and loved ones, subscribers may want to put FIRST THINGS in their wills, thus helping to assure the long-term future of this work. Bequests are free of estate tax, and can substantially reduce the amount of your assets claimed by the government. You can give needed support for FIRST THINGS by simply including the following words in your will: *I give, devise, and bequeath to the Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010 (insert amount being given here) to be used to support the ministry of FIRST THINGS.* A bequest can be a specific dollar amount, a specific piece of property, a percentage of an estate, or all or part of the residue of an estate. You can also name FIRST THINGS as a contingency beneficiary in the event someone named in your will is no longer living.

It is recommended that a lawyer help in drafting or amending a will.

GALLERY BYZANTIUM
Treasures Past and Present



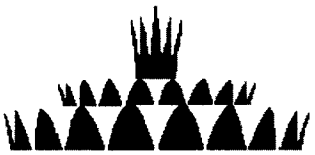
Purchase our entire collection online at:
www.gallerybyzantium.com
1-800-798-6173

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RECOUNTING WESLEY'S story this way might make it seem that he ended his life a tragic failure. But just as dissenting Christianity in England grew to encompass nearly half of English worshippers by the middle of the nineteenth century, so too Wesley's insistence that holiness is the substance of religion (with faith but its portal) soon gave birth to the various "holiness churches," and these later gave birth to Pentecostalism, now the fastest-growing form of Protestant Christianity in the world.

Whether Wesley himself would have counted these vast numbers of nonconforming Christians as representing "success" might be doubted, for it was never his intention to break away from the Church of England (in which, like his father Samuel and his brother Charles, he was ordained). But by the end of his days the split was becoming inevitable. Indeed, Wesley himself provoked the split (which took place only after his death) when he went ahead and ordained ministers for America. That move proved Wesley's Rubicon, for to ordain without his bishop's permission meant a de facto break; and we are not surprised to learn that at this point he was finally claiming that priests and bishops are the same, so that he had the authority to ordain.

How non-Methodists react to his innovations no doubt depends on their attachment to the ancient creeds and to the apostolic succession which they express. But for me the greater interest in Wesley's life comes not from his break with Anglicanism, determinative as that was for the paths taken by American Methodism, but from the constancy and consistency of his zeal, often in the face of ferocious persecution (he escaped death several times by only the narrowest of margins, merely for preaching outdoors



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY

A Benedictine Monastery of Catholic priests and brothers

Is the Lord calling you to join us

- in exploring the mystery of God in prayer;
- in living a common life;
- in the work of teaching or administration in an outstanding college preparatory school for boys, grades 7 through 12?

For more information, go to **www.stlouisabbey.org**

or contact: Father Ralph Wright, OSB • Saint Louis Abbey
500 South Mason Road • Saint Louis, MO 63141
Tel: 1-800-638-1527 or 1-314-434-5774
Email: frralph@priory.org

YES WE PURCHASE BOOKS!

Individual books and entire libraries (large and small, private and institutional libraries)

Here are just a few of the places to which we traveled recently to purchase books:

- ✔ Ann Arbor
- ✔ Boston
- ✔ Buffalo
- ✔ Cheyenne
- ✔ Chicago
- ✔ Dallas
- ✔ Detroit
- ✔ Great Britain
- ✔ Houston
- ✔ Ithaca
- ✔ Los Angeles
- ✔ Louisville
- ✔ Manhattan
- ✔ Montreal
- ✔ Nashville
- ✔ Ottawa
- ✔ Philadelphia
- ✔ Providence
- ✔ Quebec
- ✔ San Francisco
- ✔ Sarasota
- ✔ Vancouver
- ✔ Washington D.C.
- ✔ Wheeling
- ✔ Winnipeg

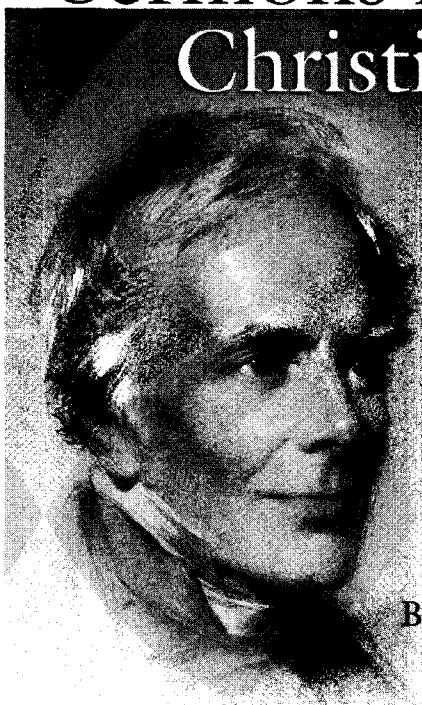
If you have books to sell, let us know. We travel to you; we do all the work; we pay on the spot; and no one pays more for good scholarly books than do we.

Loome
Theological Booksellers
320 North Fourth Street
Stillwater, Mn 55082
Phone: 651-430-1092
Fax: 651-439-8504
e-mail: books@loomebooks.com
Website:
www.loomebooks.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and to all comers). Yet he kept doggedly on, never wavering, always preaching, always writing in his journal, always on the go, always interrogating his own soul, but never on that account cooling his zeal for the gospel, which he preached in season and out. Perhaps the final word on this remarkable man can only be made by that apostle on whom he most modeled himself, St. Paul: "We are only the earthen vessels that hold this treasure," he said in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "to prove that such an overwhelming power comes from God, not from us."

Sermons for the Christian Year



John Keble

Selected and introduced by
MARIA POGGI JOHNSON

Foreword by
BISHOP GEOFFREY ROWELL

"John Keble's warm piety, theological depth, and literary grace will endear these sermons to readers. This is a book for meditation. Read it slowly — a paragraph, even a sentence, at a time. Linger over its words and ponder its wisdom. Let it become a companion through the year as the church's calendar turns from Advent to Christmas, Lent through Easter, Pentecost to the Sundays of summer and fall, and take it up afresh with the return of Advent the next year. Keble's *Sermons for the Christian Year* has the potential to become a minor spiritual classic."

— ROBERT LOUIS WILKEN
University of Virginia

ISBN 0-8028-2299-1 • 220 pages • paperback • $23.00

At your bookstore,
or call 800-253-7521
www.eerdmans.com

4558 WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

BRIEFLY NOTED

THE FATE OF THEIR COUNTRY: POLITICIANS, SLAVERY EXTENSION, AND THE COMING OF THE CIVIL WAR.
By MICHAEL F. HOLT.
Hill and Wang. 168 pp. $20.

This is a book that has everything going for it except its arbitrarily imposed—and quite unpersuasive—thesis. Holt, a historian at the University of Virginia, has already written two highly regarded scholarly works on the politics of slavery extension and the coming of the Civil War. He revisits that territory in the hope, he says, of reaching a broader, non-scholarly audience. The result is a readable, intelligent, and highly competent survey of the intense sectional controversies that arose over the issue of the extension of slavery to the western territories from the 1840s until the outbreak of war. The argument is very tightly packed—one doubts that the author will garner the popular audience he seeks—but it does justice to the complexities of the subject. Except, that is, for the author's recurring attacks on the politicians of the era for acting . . . well, like politicians. Rather than concerning themselves with "any long-term concern for the health, indeed, the very preservation, of the Union," Holt says, representatives of both North and South "made decisions from short-term calculations of partisan, factional, or personal advantage." Does this mean, as the dust jacket baldly states, that politicians were to blame for an otherwise avoidable war? Not really. Holt is too good a historian to deny the deep moral, political, and economic differences over slavery extension that were the heart of the matter and that ultimately caused secession and war. Politicians of the era no doubt bun-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gled aplenty—they normally do—but to focus on the bungling is gravely to mistake how it is that war came. Fortunately, the author for the most part tells his story with his eye on the essentials. Readers can concentrate on the main, and mostly dependable, story line and simply pass over the halfhearted gratuitous editorializing that mars an otherwise commendable effort.

—James Nuechterlein

AGAINST THE MODERN WORLD: TRADITIONALISM AND THE SECRET INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.
By MARK SEDGWICK.
Oxford University Press.
370 pp. $35.

There's tradition, and then there's Tradition (or "Traditionalism," as this fascinating survey would have it). Traditionalism has little to do with the conservative's respect for the real historical past. Rather, hard-core Traditionalists dismiss almost the whole of the post-medieval West as a doomed falling away from the primordial ideal of the spiritual society. In a sort of reverse Orientalism, Traditionalists find that ideal in a decontextualized harmony of the sacred texts of non-Western societies, and particularly in Islam. In its different incarnations, Traditionalism has sometimes managed to be "perennialist," revolutionary, and apocalyptic at the same time. The author, Mark Sedgwick, teaches at the American University in Cairo. The pattern of influence he describes starts with René Guénon, the founder of modern Traditionalism, and the little world of French occultism. However, it quickly expands to prominent and unexpected places. There are strange parts to this story. One facet is the largely clandestine spread of Sufi orders among influential artists and intellectuals in the West in the first half of the twentieth century. Another is the esoteric fascism of Julius Evola, an important factor in European terrorism of all political stripes in the 1960s and '70s. Traditionalism never sought a mass audience, but it measurably affected the general culture through its largely unacknowledged influence on the development of the field of "religious studies." Traditionalism is not the key to understanding the twentieth century. Neither is it fundamentally sinister, Sedgwick assures us. Be that as it may, a school of thought that influenced not just Mircea Eliade and Huston Smith, but also André Gide,

Is This Call For You?

The Benedictine Monastic Life Intern Program at Portsmouth Abbey is a unique opportunity to live and learn about monastic life, teach classes and consider the possibility that ***This Call May Be For You.***

Experience the well-balanced life of a Benedictine monk, including daily common prayer, spiritual reading, work and time for rest and exercise in a beautiful seaside location on the shores of Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island.

If you are a college educated, single, Catholic man, aged 20-50, you are invited to apply for our 10-week teaching internship at Portsmouth Abbey School, the nation's leading coeducational Catholic Benedictine boarding school.

Call Dan McDonough at 401.683.2000 ext. 255
(*mcd@portsmouthabbey.org*) or email Father Ambrose at
fatherambrose@portsmouthabbey.org

PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL
285 Cory's Lane Portsmouth, Rhode Island 401.683.2000
visit our website: *www.portsmouthabbey.org*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thomas Merton, and E. F. Schumacher ought to be better known. After reading this book, you will never see an allusion to the "transcendental unity of religions" in quite the same light again.

—*John J. Reilly*

Dordt College
Faculty Positions
August 2005

Dordt College is seeking applications in the following areas:

Business Administration
Human Resources and other fields.

Communication
The department is especially interested in applicants with background and expertise in visual communication.

Education
Introductory, upper-level (elementary and secondary methods).

Health, Physical Education, Recreation
Introductory and upper-level courses and some coaching.

Mathematics
Introductory and intermediate-level courses.

Music
Preference for organ, church music and music history.

To learn more about a position and to receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs
Facsimile: 712-722-4496

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution that strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities, and disabled persons.

Postmodern Heretics: The Catholic Imagination in Contemporary Art.

By Eleanor Heartney.
Midmarch Arts Press. 198 pp. $24.

Few critics would seem more qualified to write about contemporary art than Eleanor Heartney, and her latest book, with cover endorsements from Arthur Danto and Andrew Greeley, has the look of an important contribution. In this collection of essays Heartney undertakes to expose the hidden Catholicism in the works of controversial artists ranging from Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano to Karen Finley and Carolee Schneeman, and to explain their perceived irreligious tendencies as misunderstood impulses towards the divine. By interpreting these artists as "religious seekers" she intends to help her readers to "enlarge" their "definitions of religion" and to reclaim "the real message of Jesus and his gospel of love and tolerance." But things go awry before the end of the book's preface, in which the self-professed "good Catholic girl" makes clear her rejection of the unjust Christian god. She goes on to reject many of his followers as well, with William Donohue, Jerry Falwell, Franklin Graham, and many others being scourged, while she assiduously crafts sympathetic glosses on anti-Christian artworks. Billed as a book to build bridges across our cultural divides, it is in reality a one-way conduit for self-serving pontifications. To situate Mapplethorpe, et al., within the ranks of Catholicism requires Heartney to stretch terms such as "Catholic" and "sacramental" into forms devoid of theological meaning, and Heartney's tendentious commentary on art requires from the reader a measure of generosity that the author never extends to her ideological foes.

—*Rob Colvin*

The Rape of the Masters: How Political Correctness Sabotages Art.

By Roger Kimball.
Encounter Books. 186 pp. $25.95.

Roger Kimball takes a hard look at the depredations visited on great and good paintings by contemporary art historians. Kimball brings to our attention such paintings as Courbet's *The Quarry*, Sargent's *The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit*, Rubens' *Drunken Silenus*, Homer's *The Gulf Stream*, and others, and examines the interpretations of them offered, or rather perpetrated, by some leading art historians, such as David Lubin of Wake Forest University and Albert Boime of the University of California at Los Angeles. The treatment of the paintings by these historians is, among other things, weird, obtuse, sex-obsessed, and, above all, ideological. Kimball brilliantly ridicules their nonsense, and does so in the serious cause of saving our ability to see and to appreciate. As Kimball rightly argues, such criticism has "the power to taint, to adulterate, to besmirch our experience of art." The shortcoming of this brief book, perhaps inherent in the author's polemical task, is that it is negative, and to see how well Kimball conveys his own appreciations of great art a reader must look to his other works (his rich essays on Eakins and Delacroix, for instance, in his collection titled *Art's Prospect*). But that quibble seems almost impertinent today, when the main task is to repel the invasion of the ideologues and to restore sanity to art history.

—*Gregory J. Sullivan*

Watch Me Grow!

By Stuart Campbell, M.D.
St. Martin's Press. 112 pp. $24.95.

Putting an exclamation point in your title is not usually a good idea. But this title might well claim three or four more of them, so remarkable is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the little book that it introduces. "A unique, three-dimensional week-by-week look at baby's behavior and development in the womb" is the subtitle of this collection of 3-D and 4-D ultrasound scans of living unborn babies. Dr. Campbell, a distinguished obstetrician and a pioneer in ultrasound use, says that "many years ago my colleagues and I showed that the conventional 2-D scan was helpful in promoting bonding before birth; but now, with the experience I have gained over the years, I can say confidently that 3-D and 4-D is much superior in this regard. The reaction of parents to 'seeing' their as yet unborn baby is extraordinary." The reaction of any person who begins to leaf through this illustrated chronicle of human gestation will surely be extraordinary as well, and the book should be helpful in promoting "bonding" of all readers with all unborn babies, as it graphically documents the contention (made, for example, in this issue by William Saunders) that from zygote to embryo to fetus to birth, each human organism is nothing but human. These are not the grainy, gray-black, flat images that one associates with the phrase "fetal ultrasound," but golden-toned images of fully rounded tiny creatures going about their incredible lives and preparing to join us in the extrauterine world. The accompanying text is clear, concise, and memorable. *Watch Me Grow!* would be a superb gift for any prospective parent, an eye-opening presentation of fetal growth for any student, and, even, a useful addition to the library (or the waiting-room literature) of any medical professional. Dr. Campbell has made an invaluable contribution to our comprehension of the most intimate of human matters and the most controverted of public policy issues.

THE QUR'AN.
Translated by
M. A. S. ABDEL HALEEM.
Oxford University Press.
463 pp. $27.

Since September 11, there has been a bull market in literature on Islam as Westerners wonder what on earth it is that "those people" believe. The best place to begin is with the text of the putative revelations to Mohammed fourteen hundred years ago. The most commonly used English translation is that of N. J. Dawood, published by Penguin in 1956. Haleem, who is professor of Islamic studies at London University, believes that Dawood is excessively belligerent in his rendering of some sayings, especially those dealing with "disbelievers" (meaning mainly Christians and Jews), but Haleem's own, presumably more irenic, translation is bloodcurdling enough. The Qur'an (the spelling now fast replacing "Koran") is not meant to be read straight through and has little of the narrative form of Jewish and Christian Scripture. It is composed of 114 suras, or sayings, ranging from a few verses to as many as twenty pages. The suras are the written form, in Arabic, of the oral revelations "sent down" to Mohammed. The Haleem translation contains many useful footnotes and an admirably complete index. In view of the dramatically changed religious, cultural, and geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century, no educated reader can be without an elementary familiarity with the

You've heard your call

Now find your home

You know you want to be a priest, but wonder if there's a place for you. Somewhere between secular and religious priestly life. A place where you can be a man of prayer, but not an enclosed monk. A place where you can speak the ancient truths of the Catholic tradition, but in language a contemporary culture can understand. Where intellectual life is valued, but not an ivory tower. Where men of apostolic zeal can find affirmation and encouragement in a community of like-minded colleagues.

If these ideals appeal to you, you owe it to yourself to find out more about the Oratorian tradition. We are inviting young men to come to our home between Dec. 25 and Jan. 1 for fellowship, prayer and conversation. For more information, please visit our Web site at **www.stphilipnerihouse.org.**

ST. PHILIP NERI HOUSE
Faithful, Prayerful, Joyful
A COMMUNITY IN FORMATION
219 Woodward Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007 • Phone: 269-385-9933 • info@stphilipnerihouse.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FOURTH ANNUAL

Symposium on the Spirituality and Identity of the Diocesan Priest

INTERIORITY FOR MISSION:

Spiritual Formation for Priests of the New Evangelization

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Mr. James Keating, Ph.D.

CO-SPONSORED BY:

The Institute for Priestly Formation
and St. John Vianney Theological Seminary

Saint John Vianney
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

- Most Rev. Samuel Aquila
- Most Rev. Robert Carlson
- Most Rev. Felipe Estevez
- Most Rev. David Ricken
- Very Rev. John Canary
- Very Rev. Michael Glenn
- Very Rev. Patrick Williams
- Rev. Richard Gabuzda
- Dr. Anthony Lilles
- Mrs. Mary Ann McLaughlin
- Rev. Rodrigo Polanco

HELD IN DENVER, COLORADO
MARCH 3 – 6, 2005

CONTACT:

Rev. Richard J. Gabuzda • 402-546-6384 • ipf@creighton.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fundamental text of Islam, and this new translation is therefore to be warmly welcomed.

Freedom of Speech: Rights and Liberties under the Law.
By Ken I. Kersch.
ABC-Clio. 394 pp. $55.

Carrying an epilogue by the conservative (aka classically liberal) James Fitzjames Stephen, this suggests itself as a worthy textbook on a subject of perennial importance. In addition to a reliable historical survey, 150 pages are given to texts of pertinent American documents and court decisions.

The War for Righteousness.
By Richard Gamble.
ISI. 300 pp. $15 paper.

"God is on our side." "This President is the instrument of America's divinely appointed destiny." "The God-given task of America is to bring freedom and democracy to the world." That fanatical religious right is at it again? Not quite. Gamble's subtitle is "Progressive Christianity, the Great War, and the Rise of the Messianic Nation." And the President referred to above is Woodrow Wilson. Eighty years ago, the conflation of God's purposes in history, the Christian mission, civilizational progress, and American power was affirmed with dogmatic certitude by the most influential liberal religionists, Harry Emerson Fosdick prominent among them. The World War I story of "preachers presenting arms" has been told before, but Gamble tells it well. The heirs of liberal Protestantism today are more likely to demonize American power than to glorify it, and one wishes the author had offered some explanation of how that came to be. But what he has done is of great importance. Cautions against the streak of national messianism in the American experience are always relevant, and not least of all today.

Rising '44: The Battle for Warsaw.
By Norman Davies.
Viking. 785 pp. $32.95.

Not to be confused with the much better known uprising of the Warsaw ghetto a year earlier, the rising of the title refers to the insurgency of Poles, including the remaining Polish Jews, against the Nazi occupation. It began on August 1, 1944, and ended with the German obliteration of Warsaw two months later. Despite the author's idiosyncratic and condescending substitution of nicknames for Polish surnames he assumes readers will not be able to keep straight, the story is fast-paced and keeps in play the action in Warsaw as well as the diplomatic dramas in London, Moscow, and Washington. As Poles involved in the rising died by the thousands every day, the massive Soviet army sat passively by on the far side of the Vistula, Churchill and the British anguished over their broken promises, and Roosevelt could hardly have cared less. The Soviet betrayal of agreements at Yalta, Davies plausibly argues, marks the beginning of the Cold War. The book gives respectful but brief attention to the central role of Catholicism in the rising and in the larger history of Polish national aspirations. *Rising '44* makes shamefully clear why Poland and neighboring countries that fell to "the evil empire" had little cause to celebrate the ending of World War II.

Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity.
By Karl Paul Donfried.
Eerdmans. 347 pp. $26 paper.

A noted Lutheran scholar and authority on I Thessalonians provides a rich appreciation of the text read in close conversation with the world of Qumran and the ineradicable Jewishness of Paul. Among other points of interest, Donfried makes a convincing case that, whatever might be said for the Reformation theology of justification by faith alone, it cannot credibly appeal to the gospel as preached by Paul.

The Vatican-Israel Accords.
Edited by Marshall J. Breger.
Notre Dame University Press. 416 pp. $55.

In 1993, the Holy See and the state of Israel established formal diplomatic relations. This book of essays by American, Israeli, and European authors examines both the original accords and how they have been observed and ignored in subsequent years. A valuable contribution to understanding a frequently troubled relationship.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

INTERNATIONALISMS

Among the most oft-quoted statements on American foreign policy is that of John Quincy Adams in 1821: "Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions, and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy." At the same time, as John Lewis Gaddis underscores in his recent book *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience*, the same John Quincy Adams laid the foundation for a lasting policy of unapologetic unilateralism, including preemptive military action, when American interests are at stake. Defenders of the Bush administration's actions in Afghanistan and Iraq point out that these were not instances of going abroad seeking monsters to destroy. On September 11, the monsters came to us, making no secret of their desire to destroy us. No matter who had been President, the response to September 11 would have been dramatic and probably would have included military action on a greater or lesser scale. But that does not settle the arguments over the justice or wisdom of what President Bush decided to do.

In these pages we have published lively—some might say harsh—exchanges on the Bush policy by Rowan Williams, Stanley Hauerwas, Paul Griffiths, and Jean Bethke Elshtain. George Weigel, writing chiefly in defense of the just war tradition, was also supportive of the direction of administration policy. My own comments in this section, following the invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003, were critical of religious leaders who had donned the mantle of prophets in predicting a holocaust of civilian casualties and an America bogged down in "another Vietnam." After the outrages of Abu Ghraib were revealed, I sharply challenged Alan Dershowitz and other writers who advocated the moral legitimation of torture. But as some readers have pointed out, either in praise or complaint, the war on terror has not been center stage in these pages. The editors, of course, are responsible for deciding what subjects have priority in "a journal of religion, culture, and public life." With respect to the thousands of unsolicited manuscripts received, and in commissioning articles, we regularly ask two questions: Does this fit the distinctive purpose of FIRST THINGS? Does this advance the discussion of the issue addressed? In considering articles and reviews, we tend to shy away from subjects that are amply, and more or less adequately, addressed in other publications. Editing is an exercise in the art of discretion, and such judgment calls are eminently debatable; as, indeed, they are debated among the editors.

In relation to foreign policy, we have a most particular interest in preserving, clarifying, and refining just war doctrine. That tradition of thought, dating back at least to St. Augustine, is indispensable to avoiding the trap of being caught between various pacifisms, on the one hand, and, on the other, the amoral maxim that, in love and war, "anything goes." The reasons for going to war (*ad bellum*) and conduct in war (*in bello*) must be subject to disciplined moral reflection. Here FIRST THINGS has a special responsibility, for these questions are generally not addressed with systematic care in publications such as the *New York Review of Books*, the *New Republic*, or *National Review*. In a forthcoming issue we will have a major article on the history and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

development of just war thinking by James Turner Johnson, who is probably the world's premier authority on the subject. It is objected that just war doctrine has not prevented wars, in response to which it might be observed that the Sixth Commandment has not prevented people from committing adultery. Questions of war and warfare must not be permitted to escape the orbit of moral scrutiny. Nor is it helpful to view these questions through the prism of partisan politics, which has generally been the norm since September 11.

Conflicting Internationalisms

Yet conflicting visions of America's role in the world—visions resulting in partisan alignments and realignments—also have a powerful bearing on how we think about questions of war and peace. We are witnessing today what might be described as a conflict of internationalisms. Some writers have claimed that "the conservative movement" is now splitting along the old divide between isolationists and internationalists. Old-fashioned isolationism is associated with the likes of Senator Robert Taft and Charles Lindbergh (the latter being the subject of a new historical fantasy by novelist Philip Roth). Figures such as George F. Will and Pat Buchanan are cited as representing that strain of thought today. In his more intemperate jeremiads about the American republic succumbing to the lust for empire, Buchanan fits the isolationist stereotype, as do publications such as *Chronicles* and the *Southern Partisan*. George Will, on the other hand, has been critical of what he views as the overreach of Bush's war on terrorism but understands the inevitability, for better and worse, of America's unprecedented dominance in world affairs, and the international and transnational entanglements that dominance necessarily entails. He is an internationalist.

But that internationalism is different from the vision proposed by, for instance, the *Weekly Standard* or Norman Podhoretz's recent article in the September issue of *Commentary*, "World War IV: How It Started, What It Means, and Why We Have To Win." This is the assertive internationalism regularly and somewhat misleadingly attributed to those called "neoconservatives." Some call it, meaning no compliment, democratic globalism. There is yet a third internationalism, represented by John Kerry and reflecting the consensus within what is described as the "foreign policy establishment." I am obviously painting with broad strokes, but this third internationalism is strongly committed to international institutions, international law, and coordination with countries similarly committed, in order to ensure that U.S. policies pass "the global test," to borrow a phrase Senator Kerry used in debate with President Bush. In this view, it is suggested that the war on terror is more accurately described as a defensive police action against criminal activities. The goal is to contain terrorism, if necessary by killing some terrorists, and to do so in a way that does not provoke further anger against America. One important way to do that is to make sure that America acts in concert with other nations, preferably through the United Nations, which bestows "moral legitimacy" on what is to be done.

Of these three internationalisms, the first two are agreed that America must remain the master of its own policies. A new book by Jeremy Rabkin of Cornell University is a great help in sorting out the contending arguments. The book is *The Case for Sovereignty: Why the World Should Welcome American Independence* (AEI Press, 255 pp., $25). The book is praised by both George Will and Robert Kagan, contributing editor of the *Weekly Standard*. Rabkin is especially astute in challenging the legitimacy, never mind the power to bestow moral legitimation, of institutions such as the International Criminal Court and the UN. International law that is not derived from or accountable to a political sovereign is doubtfully law at all, and is certainly not what the Declaration of Independence calls just government derived from the consent of the governed. Since Rabkin wrote the book, the corruption and criminal activity of the UN has become glaringly evident in, for instance, the "Oil for Food" program that was so skillfully manipulated for years by Saddam Hussein. Apart from corruption and crime, however, Rabkin's argument goes to the heart of the question of how and by whom force can be responsibly used in world affairs. He makes a persuasive case that world peace and human rights are better secured by the judicious exercise of national sovereignty (and not only American sovereignty) than by institutions that speak for and are answerable to an amorphous "international community."

International affairs continues to be, in the phrase of Hans Morgenthau, "politics among nations." The Augustinian sensibility of a Reinhold Niebuhr is still required for deflating utopianisms and recognizing interests in conflict, and to do so with a realism that does not succumb to cynicism. Moral judgment is necessary, as is the awareness of different moralities in conflict. Politics among nations may also be politics among cultures, resulting in, as Samuel Huntington put it, a clash of civilizations. In the war on terror, we have been too reticent in acknowledging the challenge posed by Islam's culture, morality, and very different civilizational aspirations. It is understandable that political leaders are eager not to define the conflict in terms of religious warfare, but that does not require

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

speaking of Islam as a religion of peace that a few fanatics have hijacked for their lethal purposes. We must hope that there are Muslim thinkers of influence who will succeed in setting it right, but there is something terribly wrong with Islam in its inability to get along with the non-Muslim world. Almost everywhere we witness what Huntington calls "the bloody borders of Islam." Most Muslims, like most people everywhere, may be decent and lovers of peace. But as an Egyptian newspaper, addressing recent events with refreshing candor, told its Muslim readership, "Not all Muslims are terrorists, but all the terrorists are Muslim." There is perhaps a better phrase than clash of civilizations, but we are in for a very long struggle.

Americans and those on our side of the clash should stop depicting the struggle in terms that Niebuhr described as "the children of light against the children of darkness." To be sure, there is a conflict between good and evil—as in the deliberate targeting of the innocent and the publicized beheadings of hostages. But, in the larger picture of world affairs, neither good nor evil is as unmixed as we would like to think. We need to abandon the conceit that they hate us only because of how wonderful we are—how free, how productive, how powerful, how rich, and (repeat ten times) how free. No doubt there is *ressentiment*, but it is *ressentiment* with a multitude of reasons that we need to understand, if not accept. Islam was for a thousand years a civilization of triumphant conquest, until it was forced into retreat and centuries of being dominated, humiliated, and manipulated by the West, which, it is never forgotten by Muslims, is the Christian West. As for our blessed freedom, it has also brought to the world pornography, abortion, irreligion, and rampant licentiousness in the name of liberty.

On balance and considering the alternatives, America has been and is an influence for good in the world. Among the great and good things about America is our experiment in constitutional democracy that, while severely compromised, has not been ended. That experiment has been an inspiration for many others, but it is doubtful that it should be viewed as a global prescription, and certainly not a prescription we can compel others to accept. I believe that military action in removing the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein and his regime in Iraq could be morally justified on the basis of what was known then. Some of what almost all informed people thought they knew then has turned out not to be the case. Saddam Hussein's presumed possession of and ability to use weapons of mass destruction is the most obvious instance. What is known in retrospect has led to long second thoughts, and not only about the competence of the intelligence services. I am not persuaded that post-war policies in Iraq have been, as so many claim, an unmitigated disaster. In fact, the timetable for post-war transition that was set out more than a year ago appears to be more or less on track. Of course mistakes were made and are being made. That comes with what is aptly called the fog of war. There is no reason why generals and their political superiors should publicly catalogue their mistakes, and many reasons why they shouldn't, not least being the morale of the troops under their command. Those who condemn the war because soldiers and innocent civilians are killed and maimed are not being serious. That is what happens in war, and is a very good reason for avoiding war. War is always, as John Paul II said on the eve of the invasion of Iraq, a failure for mankind. There ought to be better ways of resolving conflicts and containing evil. But sometimes war is justified and necessary. There is a lively and legitimate argument about whether, knowing what we know now, this war was justified and necessary. That argument should be conducted in the awareness that leaders do not have the convenience of making decisions retrospectively. Wherever one comes down in that argument, it is to be hoped that the U.S. policy in Iraq succeeds, not least because for America to fail in such a momentous undertaking, and to be seen to have failed, would have ominous consequences for the future of world peace and stability.

Defining Success

What does it mean to succeed? Certainly not that next year or ten years from now democracy will be securely achieved in Afghanistan or Iraq. That, I expect, will not happen. Maybe politicians feel it necessary to use the term democracy because of our impoverished vocabulary in which democracy simply means government that is more or less decent. Such usage, however, is gravely misleading. If by democracy we mean liberal, constitutional, representative government, it is a difficult and rare achievement and is not securely achieved even among us who have been at it for a very long time. Talk about establishing democracy in Iraq and then in the greater Middle East can be delusory. Maybe a hundred years from now, but that is beyond the control of today's decision makers. Equally wrongheaded is the equation of democracy with holding elections. As we discovered in Algeria in 1992 and may yet discover in Afghanistan and Iraq, popular elections can end up putting the fanatics in power. That, for instance, would likely be the result were the royal family of Saudi Arabia to yield to popularly elected government tomorrow.

In these pages, we have adumbrated in a thousand different ways why politics is in largest part dependent

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

upon culture, and why culture is the product of a morality and meaning most deeply grounded in religion. On all these scores, the Islamic world is grievously impoverished. That does not mean Islamic nations are not capable of democracy. It does mean democracy will require deep and difficult transformations not just in politics but, much more importantly, in culture, morality, and religion. That almost certainly will not happen in the foreseeable future, and nobody should suggest that the success of American policy depends upon its happening. Success in Iraq is, in no small part, having removed the regime of Saddam Hussein, thus ending the monstrous rule of a systematic perpetrator of crimes against humanity. Success is in demonstrating that America has the capacity and will to respond when attacked. In that connection, the final report of Charles Duelfer and the Iraq Study Group leaves little doubt in my mind that Saddam had the intention and, if America had dallied or left it to the UN, would have had the weaponry to dominate the Middle East and, in collusion with terrorist networks, inflict massive damage on America and the West. Finally, success will be if, three or thirty years from now, Afghanistan and Iraq have reasonably decent and stable governments, operating under something believably like the rule of law and generally respecting the civil rights of their citizens. If Iraq were, in time, to lead the nations of the region in bringing about a more responsible government in Palestine and making peace with Israel, that would be great success.

Internationalism of Circumstance

With few exceptions, we are all internationalists now. We have little choice in the matter. Jefferson worried whether our form of government could survive expansion on a continental scale. Now, by force of both intention and happenstance, our sphere of power and responsibility has expanded far beyond that. The liberal internationalism of diminished sovereignty is an abdication of responsibility and would be neither in our interest nor in the interest of world peace. The internationalism of global crusading for democracy is a delusion fraught with temptations to the hubris that has been the tragic undoing of men and nations throughout history. We should, rather, think of ours as an internationalism of circumstance, whose obligations we will not shirk. Our first obligation is to repair and keep in good repair our constitutional order and the cultural and moral order on which it depends. That we cannot do unless we are prepared to defend ourselves, not going abroad to seek monsters to destroy but also not fearing to resist and counter those who would destroy us.

An internationalism of circumstance, with its attendant duties, does not provide the thrilling drum rolls of the crusade or the glories of empire. Nor does it indulge dangerous dreams of escape into a new world order on the far side of national sovereignty. The world continues to be a world of politics among nations with, for better and worse, the United States as the preeminent nation for the foreseeable future. We cannot build nations, although we can at times provide encouragement and incentives for those determined to build their own. We cannot bestow democracy, but we can befriend those who aspire to democracy. We can build coalitions or act on our own for the relief of misery and the advancement of human rights, always having done the morally requisite calculation of our capacities and interests, and knowing that it is in our interest to be perceived as doing our duty. We can try to elicit, engage, and nurture constructive voices within Islam, recognizing that the Muslim future will be determined in largest part by those who seek to do what they believe to be God's will in relation to the infidel, which will always mean us. Above all, we can strive to be a people more worthy of moral emulation, which includes, by no means incidentally, our dependability in rewarding our friends and punishing those who insist upon being our enemies. Finally, given our circumstance of preeminence and the perduring force of envy and resentment in a sinful world, we need not flaunt our power. Whenever possible, we should act in concert with other sovereign nations, and especially other democracies. Often America will have to lead, and sometimes have to act alone. When we do, we should not expect to be thanked, never mind loved. We frequently will be, as in fact we frequently are, but that is to be deemed no more than a bonus for being and doing what we should.

Our December 2001 editorial "In a Time of War" observed: "The statement of a war aim signifies not only a purpose but also a terminal point. When will we know that it is over? President Bush has declared, 'It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.' After September 11, we are or should be in a permanent state of heightened vigilance, but we must not resign ourselves to being in a permanent state of war. Not immediately, but in due course, we need a clear statement on how we will know that the war is over and a just peace is reasonably secured. There may never be, and there should never be, a return to the last decade's delusory holiday from the vicissitudes of history, but it seems probable that a democracy cannot survive and flourish in a permanent state of emergency." That was three years ago. This is written before the outcome of the presidential election is known. John Kerry apparently believes that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

we are not, or at least should not be, at war. A Kerry presidency would likely move toward the internationalism of diminished sovereignty described above. If George W. Bush is reelected, we will need a new and more persuasive statement of an internationalism that is compatible with our interests and capacities, and that proposes a believable alternative to an America and a world in a permanent state of war.

Admittedly, this vision is far removed from the Christmas angels' announcement of peace on earth and good will among men. That promise is sacramentally anticipated in the City of God journeying through time toward the temple of the New Jerusalem by whose light the nations shall walk and to which the kings of the earth shall bring their glory (Revelation 21). Meanwhile, in the lesser but also real world short of that consummation, our responsibility is to attend, in the courage of our uncertainties and with a wisdom not untouched by providential guidance, to the politics among nations—which will seldom provide us with the choices we would prefer.

FT

THE VATICAN VS. "AMERICANISM"

John Allen has written an exceedingly valuable book. It is titled *All the Pope's Men: The Inside Story of How the Vatican Really Thinks* (Doubleday, 392 pp., $24.95). Never mind that he speaks dismissively of those who write "instabooks" on matters Catholic, while admitting that he pulled this one together in less than a month. John Allen has a lot that is worth pulling together. Never mind that book-size length is achieved by a lot of padding from his earlier reporting from Rome, such as more than a hundred and fifty pages of chronological accounts of the sex abuse crisis and the Vatican's response to the war in Iraq. It is very useful material to have all in one place. The book also provides a thoughtful summary of what Allen has learned about the Holy See over his years of trying to be assiduously fair while reporting for the decidedly leftist *National Catholic Reporter*. Had the title not been taken by a recent and less interesting volume, Allen might well have called his book *Inside the Vatican*.

There are analytically descriptive sections on the structure, psychology, and sociology of the Vatican, along with a treatment of "myths" about the Vatican. The Holy See is of course the see of Peter, and the Vatican is the city-state where Peter presides surrounded by his administrative apparatus, the Curia. Allen offers a brief account of the development of papal governance, as well as an intelligent consideration of the arguments, pro and con, for the "centralization" of Petrine authority. He describes the division of labor, and sometime conflicts, between the curial dicasteries—congregations, pontifical councils, and assorted subordinate offices—and is generally sympathetic toward the people who work in them. The skeptical reader may wonder how much Allen is pulling his punches, since these are the people he needs as sources in order to do his work, but I am inclined to think his expressed respect is genuine. In part because, in my much more limited experience of the Vatican, his evaluations tend to ring true.

The chief "myths" include the notion that the Vatican has a monolithic view on everything. Without slipping into gossip, Allen does a fine job of indicating the ways in which personalities, dispositions, alliances, and turf wars keep many viewpoints in play, all within the bounds of a shared understanding that every person and every office is in the service of the pope. Similarly, the myth of Vatican secrecy is, he suggests, much exaggerated, as his own reporting demonstrates. As with any organization, some things are confidential, and there is of course the sacramental seal, but over lunches and dinners, at diplomatic receptions and in formal interviews, the Curia sometimes seems like a perpetual talk shop. Curial officers are often depicted as grasping careerists, and no doubt some are, but Allen suggests that the norm is that of people making considerable sacrifices, financial and otherwise, to serve the Church. As for the myth of the Vatican's wealth, he notes that it operates with a regular deficit and, while it owns artistic and other properties that are of inestimable value, none of them can be sold or used as security. In fact, being steward of these properties is a huge financial liability.

The Curial Mind

Under "the psychology of the Vatican," he proposes words indicative of the operative values: Authority, *bella figura*, Cosmopolitanism, Loyalty, Objectivity, Populism, Realism, Rule of Law, Time, and Tradition. Most of those may seem self-evident. Objectivity, Time, and Tradition are summed up in the maxim that Rome thinks in terms of centuries. By *bella figura* is meant that direct confrontations are, whenever possible, avoided; losers are given a chance to save face, and the hope is that everybody comes away from a difficult decision "looking

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

good." Surprising to many readers will be Allen's treatment of "populism." Rome is the final court of appeal for people in the Church who have been treated shabbily, and is generally on the side of the underdogs, notably when they, whether clerical or lay, have suffered at the hands of arbitrary or tyrannical prelates. Moreover, the Curia is populist in the sense that Rome is serious about the faithful having a right to the faith taught and practiced faithfully. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger is often called the Church's doctrinal "enforcer" and depicted as the oppressor of theologians, but Allen helps the reader to understand that he may more accurately be seen as the protector of the Catholic people from the malfeasance of academic elites.

With respect to the "sociology" of the Vatican, Allen says that curial officials, from top to bottom, are shaped by what might be called the constructions of reality within several everyday circles of experience: the Vatican itself, the city of Rome (ecclesiastical and secular), Italy (ecclesiastical and secular), and Europe. Whether an official is from the U.S., Ukraine, Brazil, or Nigeria, he becomes, in due course, curial, Roman, Italian, and European. That formation of thought, priorities, disposition, and personality is, one gathers, pretty much inevitable; and Allen is appropriately skeptical about the success of "reforms," such as those proposed by retired Archbishop John Quinn, for making the governance of the Church more "representative," perhaps by having a more or less permanent synod of bishops act as a kind of parliamentary check on executive authority. The Vatican-Roman-Italian-European formation has everything to do with Rome's response to the American sexual abuse crisis and the Iraq war, to which Allen devotes half of his book.

His chronology of the sex abuse crisis, unfortunately, stops well short of the release of the report of the National Review Board in February 2004. He does provide page upon page of what was actually said by curial officials, sundry cardinals, and other leaders. Only snippets of these texts appeared in news stories, and it is good to have them in context. The fuller documentation is frequently embarrassing, as when it is alleged that sex abuse is a distinctly American problem, or that the firestorm of publicity was motivated simply by anti-Catholicism or was orchestrated by a conspiracy of Masons working together with Jews who control the media and are repaying the Church for its pro-Palestinian sympathies. In Rome, and in Europe more generally, the frequent allusion to the Masons often puzzles Americans, for whom the Masonic Lodge is as sinister as the Rotary Club, although a good deal less influential.

It is not only the French but Europeans more generally who are inclined to think that an inveterately puritanical American culture has a hard time being sensible about sex. That more "sophisticated" European stance was reflected in European bemusement at the brouhaha attending President Clinton's dalliances, and was not absent from the reaction to the media outrage in the sex abuse crisis. When will these Americans grow up? Things happen.

Understanding Frailty

Roman officials were much and rightly concerned about the norms adopted by the U.S. bishops in their panicked meeting of Dallas 2002, including "zero tolerance" for any cleric who was at any time in his entire life accused of sex abuse—with "sex abuse" being defined so loosely as to make possible the conviction of almost any normal adult. The abovementioned populist dimension of curial culture came into play as Rome modified those norms to ensure that the accused got at least a measure of due process. Allen understands that it is not only the so-called Puritan factor that makes America different. Ours is a more legalistic culture. Some attribute that, too, to Puritanism or, as Francis Cardinal George of Chicago prefers, Calvinism. For most Europeans, and notably for Italians, the law is an ideal, it being understood that all mortals fall short of the ideal. For Americans, the law is there to be enforced. In addition, other countries do not have our system of tort law by which huge financial damages can be exacted from institutions. Finally, in many countries the age of sexual consent is lower—often sixteen or fourteen, and in a few places as low as twelve. In such societies, it is thought that young people bear a greater measure of responsibility for what they do, also sexually. This obviously reflects very different cultural attitudes toward children and childhood.

Early on in the crisis, curial officials learned to express the mandatory outrage at the damage done to victims of sexual abuse but, although Allen does not come out and say so, sometimes it seemed their hearts were not in it. The general attitude seemed to be this: Yes, of course the Pope was right when he said that there is no place in the Church's ministry for anyone who might harm children. But then, in the Church as elsewhere, we are all sinners, and sometimes even priests do evil things. Surely they should be punished, and strictly so. The Church has centuries of canon law—canon law which the American bishops did not use—specifically designed to deal with such offenses. And surely those who are hurt should be helped as much as possible. But please, perspective is required, and patience, and a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sympathetic appreciation of human frailty. Let there be no rush to judgment and, above all, let us not play into the hands of those who wish the Church nothing but ill. Such was and is the widespread, if not dominant, view within the Curia.

Then we come to the Vatican and the Iraq war. Allen offers his considered judgment: "The only possible reading of the record is that John Paul II was strongly opposed to the Iraq war." I suggest that this is not the only possible reading, but it is the most plausible reading. John Paul never explicitly condemned the war as immoral, but many curial officials did, and John Paul did not publicly distance himself from their remarks. John Paul did say that all war, including this war, represents a failure for humanity, and supporters of the war could readily agree with that, acknowledging that only when other means of resolving conflict have failed is war necessary. Allen supplies page upon page of curial criticisms of U.S. policy from August 2002 through June 2003, some of them quite strident. Curiously, he does not include Renato Cardinal Martino's assertion that there can be no just war today, an assertion that, so far as I know, has not been retracted. Most of the criticisms focused on predictions of massive civilian casualties (which did not happen); the incompatibility of preemptive and unilateral military action with traditional just war doctrine; the expectation that the action would precipitate religious warfare between Islam and Christianity; and the moral illegitimacy of such actions undertaken without United Nations approval. At least a couple of statements came close to suggesting that Catholics could not in good conscience support or participate in the intervention by the American-led coalition. Surprisingly—some thought scandalously—the Vatican was silent about Saddam Hussein's mass killings and violation of human rights, perhaps because that might lend some legitimacy to the coalition action. The Vatican had previously approved of humanitarian intervention in, for instance, the case of Kosovo.

Papal Leadership

Relative to the "most plausible reading" of John Paul's position, it is not known how many of these curial statements were brought to the Pope's attention or had his approval. This touches on the very delicate question of the Holy Father's physical debility and reduced energies. It is known that he did not publicly distance himself from the criticisms nor did he rein in the critics. Some curial officials exulted in the supposed demonstration of papal moral leadership when millions of antiwar demonstrators in Europe and elsewhere cheered John Paul as their champion. When assorted leftists, including pro-abortionists and declared enemies of the Church, take to the streets to cheer the pope, that is an instance not of papal leadership but of papal co-optation. But again, John Paul did not distance himself from, but appeared to welcome, these implausible supporters of papal moral leadership.

A great and necessary concern of the Vatican is Islamic-Christian conflict, and especially the treatment of Catholics and other Christians in predominantly Muslim countries. Vatican officials noted with satisfaction that there was no outbreak of anti-Christian hostility following regime change in Iraq, and they attributed that to the fact that the Pope, the preeminent representative of the Christian world, was perceived as being opposed to the coalition action. There is no doubt much truth to that. Beyond Islamic-Christian relations, which will be a preeminent concern for decades, very basic questions have been raised about the way the Vatican views the U.S. In a world of unipolar hegemony—or, if one prefers, empire—the Holy See may increasingly see itself as a necessary balance, if not antithesis, to the dangers of overweening American power—political, military, economic, and, above all, cultural. This is different from, say, Chirac's France nominating itself as the center of a new "multipolar" world. The Vatican city-state with its 108 acres and 1,500 residents has no illusions about being a big, little, or even very tiny power among the powers of the world. Yet it must be admitted that "how the Vatican really thinks" is not always that different from how France and other promoters of an anti-American line think. Although curial pronouncements on the Iraq war were usually prefaced by the claim that cardinals and archbishops were speaking as moral leaders and not as politicians, most of what they had to say was little more than an echo of the dominant views in the press and political chambers of what is now called "old Europe."

At the same time, John Allen is right in saying that the controversy over the Iraq war brought to the fore important issues that will have a long shelf life. Allen thinks one of those issues is the development of just war doctrine. Perhaps so, but the interventions of curial officials on just war in the run-up to the Iraq intervention were generally ad hoc, political, and matters of prudential judgment; they did not have the mark of theological and moral deliberation that one associates with a development of doctrine. At most, there is a development similar to that of John Paul's well-known opposition to capital punishment. In both cases, the Church's doctrine is deeply entrenched in the tradition, and the moral and theological questions entailed have not been addressed in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a way that rises to the level of magisterial teaching. A preferred position of the Vatican is not the same thing as a doctrine of the Church. This applies as well to Vatican attitudes toward the United Nations, the Kyoto environmental treaty, the International Criminal Court, and international law more generally. The differences between the U.S. and most of Europe on these issues is well known, and the Curia reflects the European position. That may be regrettable, but it is not surprising. The disagreements are political and not doctrinal. In fact, if one wished to press the matter of social *doctrine*, it would be highly interesting to explore how the curial position on, for instance, the International Criminal Court can be squared with the teaching of the 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus* on the accountability of governments to their societies.

As for America . . .

Allen raises a more provocative question with respect to the general disposition of Rome to the United States. He writes:

> Both the Iraq war and the sex abuse crisis suggested to Vatican observers that the ghost of John Calvin is alive and well in American culture. These reservations are well documented, from Pope Leo XIII's 1899 apostolic letter *Testem Benevolentiae*, condemning the supposed heresy of "Americanism," to Pius XII's opposition to Italy's entrance into NATO based on fears that the alliance was a Trojan horse for Protestant domination of Catholic Europe. Key Vatican officials, especially Europeans from traditional Catholic cultures, have long worried about aspects of American society—its exaggerated individualism, its hyperconsumer spirit, its relegation of religion to the private sphere, its Calvinist ethos. *A fortiori*, they worry about a world in which America is in an unfettered position to impose this set of cultural values on everyone else.

These are interesting questions indeed, and John Allen believes they are receiving very definite answers:

> At the deepest level of analysis, there is serious doubt in many quarters of the Vatican that American culture is an apt carrier for a Christian vision of the human person and therefore of the just society. . . . Though no pope and no Vatican diplomat will ever come out and say so, the bottom line is that despite great respect for the American people and their democratic traditions, the Holy See simply does not think the United States is fit to run the world. . . . Thus the Holy See's diplomatic energy in coming years will have as a central aim the construction of a multilateral, multipolar world, which will necessarily imply a limitation on the power and influence of the United States.

On all these scores, Allen may well be right. The result would be that on the world stage the Vatican will be increasingly perceived by Americans and others as anti-American, and it will be precisely that. As documented in George Weigel's authoritative biography of John Paul II, *Witness to Hope*, this has been the most pro-American pontificate in history. This Pope has made numerous and unprecedented statements on the genius of the American political and social order, and that appreciation is clearly reflected in the aforementioned *Centesimus Annus* on the just and free society. But Allen and others counter that this positive disposition toward America was but a phase, a momentary aberration created chiefly by the cooperation of Rome and the U.S. in bringing an end to "the evil empire." After the fall of Soviet communism, in this view, the Vatican has reverted to what might be called its default position, that of Leo XIII's robust suspicion of America and "Americanism."

Certainly, there are those who agree with and welcome Allen's prognosis. He cites David Schindler, editor of the English-language edition of *Communio*, who has written extensively on why—anthropologically, sociologically, and in its tacit theology—the American order is incompatible with Catholic Christianity. Moreover, there are American bishops with influence in Rome and Americans highly placed in the Curia who have been quite thoroughly Europeanized in their critique of their own country. Europeanized, that is, in the image of "old Europe." In Poland and other countries still newly liberated from Soviet communism, the view of America is quite different. Of course these countries may over time be subsumed into the worldview of the European Union, to which the Vatican may provide a kind of moral chaplaincy, even if the EU will not so much as acknowledge Christianity as part of its cultural heritage.

Murray the Minority

One readily admits that the United States is not a fit bearer of Christian culture in the world. No country or concert of countries is that. But then one must always ask: Compared to what? The European Union? Russia? Latin America? Africa? Or to stretch the point to absurdity, China? Strategic and tactical

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aspects of the war on terror aside, the argument can be made that American influence is generally on the side of the Church on the big questions: human freedom, democracy, the dignity of the human being at all points on life's continuum, the indispensable centrality of family and marriage, the economic development of poor nations, and the practice of subsidiarity in civil society. A change in U.S. administrations would likely have a negative impact on all these, but they would nonetheless remain vibrant components of the continuing American experiment.

In contrast to Leo XIII's judgment in 1899, John Courtney Murray published in 1960 *We Hold These Truths*. He made, and those who claim his legacy make, the argument that not only is Catholic faith and life compatible with the American experiment but Catholicism may be essential to preserving the experiment, even as it counters those elements of "Americanism" that are corrosive of the Church's vision. Murray's was a minority position then and, if Allen and others are right, it may become more of a minority position in the future. John Paul warmly embraced crucial aspects of the Murray argument, but on the not-so-distant horizon is another pope who will likely be shaped by, in Allen's phrase, "how the Vatican really thinks." More than in 1899 and more than in 1960, the world is being reconfigured by divergent attitudes toward America and its global hegemony, which, for better and worse, is likely to continue for a long time. It will be a very great pity if the Vatican becomes the spiritual cheerleader for those Europeans who view America with a measure of respect and even admiration mixed with a much larger measure of envy, resentment, and pitiable pretensions to moral and intellectual superiority.

In the background of that European attitude, and not very far in the background, hovers the fear of huge and restive Muslim populations in countries such as France and Germany. In a global conflict with an enemy motivated by Islamic fanaticism, these Europeans, and perhaps some in the Vatican as well, do not want to be perceived as being on the Christian side. To be sure, the Vatican has a singular responsibility to cultivate dialogue with Islam, but that dialogue will be neither credible nor fruitful if the Vatican is not clearly on the Christian side. That does not mean that in every instance the Vatican should be on the American side. A great deal of delicate diplomacy and careful thought is required. But this much is certain: in the new configuration of world power and influence, the United States is, on balance and considering the alternatives, on the Christian side.

We should all understand why President Bush refuses to speak about a clash of civilizations or to describe our circumstance as one of religio-cultural warfare. But we should all know that that is what, in fact, it is. Or, as the report of the 9/11 Commission prefers, it is an ideological conflict inescapably tied to religion. It would be an exquisite irony of history if, when war is declared on the Christian West by those inspired by a possibly perverse but undeniably Islamic ideology, the Vatican refused to take sides; thus, willy-nilly, taking the other side. The Curia's cosmopolitanism, sophistication, devotion to dialogue, and long-term perspective shaped by centuries of diplomacy can all be assets. They can also induce a blindness to the fact that an enemy has declared war and sides must be taken. The Europeans who run the Vatican are right in believing that the Vatican must not be a chaplain to American hegemony; a critical distance is required. When that distance becomes disdain, however, the credibility of the Church's political guidance and the defense of our common civilization are gravely weakened.

As I say, John Allen may well be right in his description of a Vatican reverting to Leo XIII's animus toward "Americanism." I am not persuaded that he is right, but it is one of the important arguments we are invited to engage by his valuable book, *All the Pope's Men: The Inside Story of How the Vatican Really Thinks.*

FT

POLITICAL THEOLOGIES

From time to time a writer cuts through confusing debates and polemics to expose the fundamental form of visions in conflict. This is a service that Daniel M. Bell, Jr. attempts to render with his essay "State and Civil Society" in a big book of thirty-five essays, *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, edited by Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (Blackwell, 567 pp., $124.95). The book also includes outstanding essays by Jean Bethke Elshtain on St. Augustine, Bernd Wannenwetsch on the political significance of liturgy, Robert Jenson on eschatology and the hope for the human future, and an excellent introduction for American readers to the thought of the German theological philosopher Carl Schmitt, who it is said early in the last century first used the term "political theology" and employed it to devious ends during the Third Reich.

But it is to Daniel Bell's suggestive—one might say provocative—argument that I will here attend. Bell is a Methodist who teaches at Lutheran Theology Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina, and his subject is the "dominant" and "emergent" modes of political theology today. He locates the present writer and this maga-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

zine solidly in the dominant category, while his sympathies are strongly aligned with thinkers of the emergent mode such as Stanley Hauerwas, John Milbank, and Oliver O'Donovan. Both the dominant and emergent are modes of "political theology," which is to say that they tell the Christian story (Bell calls it the Christian *mythos*) in a way that is inescapably related to the right ordering of human society. To cut to his conclusion, the dominant mode of political theology has led to "the political captivity of the Church" in service to the modern state, while the emergent mode posits the Church itself as the right ordering of human society. His steps, and missteps, toward that conclusion are instructive.

We must, Bell correctly insists, go back to a time before "state" and "civil society" assumed the modern forms that we tend to take for granted or view as inevitable. He claims that the dominant mode—whether in the form of political theology proper, Latin American liberation theology, or public theology (the last is where we come in)—assumes the givenness of the modern state and civil society. The emergent or "postmodern" mode of political theology, on the other hand, has a keener historical memory, knowing that in medieval Christendom "society was an organic whole, governed by two parallel and universal powers—the Pope and the Prince." When "the state" appears in political discourse in the fourteenth century, it refers not to a bounded space ruled by princes rather than popes, "but rather to the state or condition of the temporal princes themselves." In the modern era, "the state" refers to a centralized power with a monopoly on the use of coercive force within a defined territory. According to the conventional telling of the story, the modern state emerged from the "wars of religion" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. "Horrified by the excesses of armed religious fervor, Europe developed a political order whereby religion would no longer have access to the weapons with which to work its woe. Henceforth, religion was construed as a private matter and the public, political realm was to be watched over by a sovereign and secular state charged with keeping the peace."

A Public Church

That modern "settlement" was lucidly and very influentially defined by the German sociologist Max Weber. We inhabit, said Weber, various "life spheres," each with its own laws and ethical functions, and such spheres, while distinct, interact in a complementary manner. "Weber noted that religion was principally about the task of furnishing ideals, whereas politics was fundamentally about the manipulation of means in order to attain not the ultimate end or ideal, but what was pragmatically possible." Politics, Weber wrote, is about "the leadership, or the influencing of the leadership, of a *political* association, hence today, of a *state*." The result is that politics is now about "statecraft," the manipulation of state power. The dominant school of political theology is in basic agreement with Weber, Bell claims. The emergent school, on the other hand, points out that the wars of religion were not most importantly about religion. Catholics and Protestants frequently made alliances to fight other Catholics and Protestants. The phrase "wars of religion" is deeply prejudicial. The conflicts, writes Bell, "were in fact the birth pangs of the modern state as it struggled to break free of the remnants of the medieval order, as it strove to subsume all other social groupings under the sovereign authority." "In particular, these conflicts were about the replacement of a public Church." These are broad generalizations, which is to be expected in the kind of typology that Bell is attempting to construct. A problem begins to make its appearance in that I and some others whom he places in the "dominant" tradition have a very long record of opposing the monopolistic ambitions of the modern state and the privatizing of religion, and of adamantly insisting upon the public character of the Church.

Bell's title is "State and Civil Society," and the second is also crucial to his argument. We of the dominant school (allowing his term for the moment) are often great promoters of civil society as a force for, as Bell puts it, the "taming" of the Leviathan that is the state. We champion civil society—meaning the family, religious institutions, neighborhoods, and a host of voluntary associations—as a way of preserving spaces of freedom against the totalitarian impulses of the modern state. Peter Berger and I wrote of civil society in terms of "mediating institutions" in *To Empower People* (1976). The emergent school of political theology, writes Bell, sees these mediating institutions "in a decidedly less benign light." Rather than being spaces of freedom, they are instruments of "discipline" in which people are trained to serve the modern state. Bell writes, "Through a vast array of disciplines, learned not at the hands of government officials and bureaucrats, but 'voluntarily' through the ministrations of experts, managers, and therapists, people 'freely' and gently and, for the most part, willingly find their place in the dominant *mythos*. As such an educative or disciplinary space, civil society is but another species of the power exerted by the state in its victory over the medieval public Church." The placing of "voluntarily" and "freely" in quotes is telling. Readers of a certain age or literacy may recall Herbert Marcuse on the repressive tolerance of liberalism. In that view, parents who teach their children to be polite, work hard, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be civil to those with whom they disagree are, unwittingly, indoctrinating them into the *mythos* of the liberal state with its fine-tuned instruments of control.

Desacralized Politics

The political theology associated with the writings of Johann Baptist Metz, Jürgen Moltmann, and Dorothee Solle, beginning in the 1960s, "is forthrightly and enthusiastically a modern movement." It assumes that the modern state should be the instrument of the changes required by justice, "while the Church's political presence is reduced to that of a guardian of abstract values." The idea that the Church should provide a concrete political program "is denounced as a pernicious form of 'political religion' from which modernity has rightly liberated us." Likewise, Latin American liberation theologies "are adamant that there can be no return to the era of Christendom, when the Church directly wielded political power. . . . They, too, recognize the modern desacralization of politics as a victory in the march of freedom through history." In short, they are good Weberians. As are those of us who espouse an alternative to political theology and liberation theology. "These theologians," says Bell, "derive from Christianity a 'public philosophy' or 'public theology' capable of underwriting the moral consensus necessary to sustain the health and vitality of Western liberal society." (Unlike, for instance, the Reformed theologian Max Stackhouse, whom Bell also criticizes, I have eschewed the term "public theology," preferring "public philosophy," believing that the former suggests a too easy move from revealed truth to partisan political application, and poses an unnecessary obstacle for self-consciously secular interlocutors. For much the same reason, and for the sake of the integrity of both theology and politics, I believe the phrase "political theology" should be used with caution.)

Thus, according to Bell, do we arrive at what he calls the political captivity of the Church. Herewith the indictment:

> From the perspective of the emergent tradition, the embrace of the modern *mythos*, with its account of politics as statecraft, by the dominant tradition is symptomatic of the political captivity of that tradition. An explanation of this charge begins with the politically reductionist nature of the dominant tradition. To suggest that the dominant tradition is politically reductionist is *not* to claim, as is frequently done, that political theology reduces faith to temporal, political matters and dismisses the transcendent-spiritual dimension of Christianity. Rather, the charge of political reductionism (ironically) pertains precisely to the ways the dominant tradition attempts to distance itself from the charge of reducing faith to politics. Whether it is Neuhaus' eschatological prohibition of sanctifying any political order, Gutierrez's condemnation of "politico-religious messianism," or Metz's and Moltmann's abhorrence of "political religion," the "general" or "indirect" role accorded the Church as a guardian of values *reduces* Christian political engagement to the options offered by the world, more specifically, by the regnant liberal order. This is to say, the dominant tradition conceives of Christian political engagement on the world's terms . . . whether in its conservative or progressive modes.

In clear contrast to these Weberian theologians of politics as statecraft, Bell contends, is the emergent school of authentically Christian political theology. (Bell says that he does not use "emergent" to imply that they will at some point become dominant; he means only that they are emerging.) "The emergent finds the political correlate of the Christian mythos, not in the secular state and civil society, but in the Church. . . . Christian politics takes form in the distinct witness of the Church to Christ's redemption of politics as the renewal of the friendship/communion of humanity in God." The emergents, Bell argues, agree with Augustine's *City of God* that human polities, being dominated by the lust for power, are but parodies of genuine community, that the true polity is the life of the Church centered in the eucharistic sacrifice of redemptive reconciliation. This does not mean a wholesale rejection of modernity. Oliver O'Donovan, for example, defends a form of early modernity in which statecraft serves the Church by enabling it to carry out its mission. Bell writes, "One should note that this is an instance, not of erecting the Church within the parameters of the modern *mythos* as the dominant tradition does, but of positioning the early modern state within the Christian *mythos*, with the result that social and political space is shared by the Church and a state for the sake of the Church's mission."

The aim of the emergent tradition, says Bell, "is not simply the replacement of a sovereign state with a hegemonic Church, but a political rendering of the claim that Christ is Lord." To say that the Church is the exemplary form of human community "is first and foremost a claim that the meaning of all politics and every community flows from participation in Christ." Rejecting the statecraft of the dominant tradition, the emergents favor "a distinctly theological politics founded on the conviction that God is active in history now bringing about a new age, the contours of which

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are discernible not in Western liberalism, democratic socialism, or the *Pax Americana* but in Christ, in the work of Christ's Spirit as it gathers Christ's body, the Church." All the issues of ecclesiology, eschatology, and soteriology, writes Bell, can be summed up in one question: "What is the proper political correlate of the Christian *mythos*? Leviathan or the Body of Christ?"

Ecclesial Ambiguities

Daniel Bell's vigorously asserted argument is a valuable contribution. I say that not because I agree with his typology of the "dominant" and "emergent" visions of political theology but because he so sharply depicts the alternatives that many believe to be on offer today. Stanley Hauerwas may not be, as *Time* magazine declares, America's "best theologian," but in seminaries and divinity schools, and more among Protestants than Catholics, he is perhaps the most influential. Hauerwas' unremitting polemic against "liberalism" and all its works and all its pomps, including its practice in liberal democracy, has provided a generation of theology students with a way of thinking and feeling counterculturally that is respectable within the thoroughly liberal academy. His insistence upon the primacy of the community of the Church apparently does not require, for him or for others, actual membership in an ecclesial community that is in political tension or conflict with the culture of liberalism. Indeed, his countercultural posture is warmly celebrated by the culture he would presumably counter. (See Stephen H. Webb, "The Very American Stanley Hauerwas," FT June/July 2002.)

To his credit, Hauerwas has sometimes acknowledged a certain "ambiguity" in his ecclesial placement. He speaks admiringly of the Mennonite tradition of his mentor John Howard Yoder, and also of certain communities of radical discipleship in Catholicism, but he remains personally associated with the liberal United Methodist Church while pursuing his eccentric and highly effective vocation as a theological freelancer within his primary community of engagement, the liberal academy. Hauerwas is aware of the seeming incongruity, if not incoherence, of being a tenured radical and prophet with prestige and pension plan secured by the liberal establishment against which he rails. The oddity of his position, it should be noted, does not detract from the contributions he has made to Christian ethics in areas such as medical care and the centrality of the virtues. Contra Daniel Bell, however, these contributions have not been in political theology. As is evident in exchanges with Hauerwas also in these pages, he insists upon a Christianly-mandated position of absolute pacifism while, at the same time, claiming a role as moral instructor in the exercise of what Bell calls "statecraft" when it comes to how the state should employ force. Despite these and other dissonances in his arguments, there is no doubt that Hauerwas is a champion of the "emergent" tradition described by Bell. (Remembering, as Bell specifies, that "emergent" does not mean that it will come to prevail.)

John Milbank's project of "radical orthodoxy" has caught the imagination of some intellectuals with its pyrotechnic display of erudition and neologistic agility in smiting, hip and thigh, "objectivity," "neutrality," "rationality," and other dragons in league with the Antichrist that is "modernity." In *Theology and Social Theory* Milbank interestingly seeks to liberate the "master discourse" of theology from its sociological captivities. But one has to wonder whether he offers anything that is plausibly described as an alternative political theology. His explicitly political assertions are typically ad hoc judgments and rambling obiter dicta, usually in the mode of familiar leftisms. He draws, as many leftists do, on the aforementioned Carl Schmitt to explain why "American neo-Roman imperialism" needs an enemy and has therefore invented a war on terrorism to ward off challenges to its "nakedly capitalist" hegemony. To defend against challenges to U.S. imperialism, George W. Bush has chosen the "terrifying" expedient of declaring "for the first time perhaps since Hitler's announcement of the Third Reich, a kind of state of perpetual emergency." Guarding against extremism, Milbank reserves judgment on whether the U.S. had a hand in the September 11 attacks that became a convenient excuse for its desired war on terrorism.

Theocratic propensities, says Milbank, are not limited to Islam. "In many ways theocratic notions are specifically modern in their positivity and formality (as Carl Schmitt indicated). Bush in a crisis has appealed to the supposed divine destiny of America, and it is modern Judaism that has lapsed into a statist, Zionist form." "At the very center of this strange and multiple conflict stands oil," Milbank asserts. America's long history of the "disguised sacralization of violence" goes back to the treatment of Native Americans and the "British loyalists" during the War of Independence. (As a Brit, Milbank seems to have a special sympathy for the loyalists.) "Cumulatively, this reveals the relatively genocidal tendency of specifically Republican imperialism . . . and it amounts to an atrocity almost on the level with the Holocaust and the Gulags." The "relatively" and "almost" are, I suppose, intended to suggest nuance.

The thoughtful reader, when confronted by such dubious judgments, may think twice about investing much effort in decoding the elusive logic or theologic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that produced them. The elements of possible service in "radical orthodoxy" must be patiently mined from a vast deposit of radical posturing. The yield for anything like a political theology will, I expect, be limited to nuggets of "counter-intuitive insights" in dissertations by doctoral students enamored of Chomskyesque enthusiasms displayed under the variegated banners of a postmodernism that is, according to Milbank, a radical critique of the postmodernisms in reaction to postmodernity. It is not that John Milbank does not have a positive vision of an alternative future. He writes:

> Such a common vision would eschew all idolizations of formal power, whether in the case of individual "rights" or of absolute state sovereignty. Instead it would trust that human wisdom can intimate, imperfectly but truly, something of an eternal order of justice: the divine *rapports* of Malebranche and Cudworth. A shared overarching global polity would embody this intimation in continuously revisable structures dedicated to promoting the common good insofar as this can be agreed upon. It would also embody this imperfection through the maximum possible dispersal and deflection of human power.

Ah yes, Malebranche and Cudworth. Of course. It is, I suppose, a kind of United Nations redesigned by philosophers attuned to the seventeenth-century "occasionalism" of Nicolas Malebranche and the insights of the Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth, to whom Ralph Waldo Emerson was indebted for his confidence in the infallibility of his intuition. Sin, Milbank suggests, is our failure to realize our wonderful powers in reconciled community. Were his vision adopted, writes Milbank, "perhaps then we would cease to sacrifice the substantively particular to the generally vacuous, ensuring that there was no need for the particular to incite in response the suicidal sacrifice of everything, forever." Vacuous is a word that does leap to mind. The interesting thing relative to Daniel Bell's argument, however, is that Milbank's proposal is precisely an exercise in "statecraft." Admittedly it is not serious statecraft, since it is unrelated to any existent or available structures of power with their attendant possibilities and responsibilities. That being noted, I am sure there is much to be said for a world order with the maximum possible dispersal and deflection of human power, especially when power is in the hands of bad guys. Milbank's proposal, however, is not a very helpful contribution to political thought or practice, never mind to political theology. As for Bell's idea of the Church as the "political correlate" of the Christian mythos, Milbank's Church, unless it is in fact the fellowship of academic theologians, remains for the most part invisible. In Milbank's *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture*, the annoyingly unremitting rant against the most obvious visible candidate for the role of a sacramental "contrast community" that signals the world's redemption, namely, the Catholic Church, seems to be mainly a product of deep-seated personal prejudice.

Facing Up to Disorder

In *Bonds of Imperfection*, Joan Lockwood O'Donovan (Oliver is her husband) has written incisively about similarities between Milbank and Erasmus. "He, like Erasmus, conceives the redemption of society in terms of communicating participation in the perfections of Jesus Christ who is the final exemplar of the good and the beautiful." Each in ways pertinent to his times disdains the natural law tradition in its various forms; each fails to distinguish between the goods of human community and their disordered condition; and each neglects the providential structures of political authority with their laws and necessary recourse to coercion. Erasmus and Milbank are both high rhetoricians who suggest that the world will be saved by rhetoric, by what Milbank depicts as the divine-human "poesis" of the Word Incarnate. Joan O'Donovan concludes with the observation that Milbank is a more sophisticated philosopher than Erasmus, but his postmodernist efforts to liberate the christocentric "master discourse" from its captivity to modernity inclines him to "making of poetics yet another philosophical foundation for Christian pedagogy. Succumbing to this temptation would lend an ominous finality to any other theological and methodological weaknesses." The other weaknesses are, as I have suggested, severe. All that having been said, however, one can appreciate why Milbank's rhetorically debonair dismissal of every constraint of moral "realism," combined with the apparent radicality of his ad hoc political and ecclesial judgments, makes an intoxicating brew for graduate students who have been recruited to the total war against the Antichrist that is modernity and its bastard offspring that is liberalism.

Daniel Bell's third champion of the emergent tradition, Oliver O'Donovan, is of an entirely different order. His work, and especially his *The Desire of the Nations*, has received extended and respectful attention in these pages (see, for instance, Gilbert Meilaender's review essay in FT November 1997). We were also pleased to have O'Donovan deliver our Erasmus Lecture of 1998. His is a bracingly bold and comprehensive proposal advanced with careful, even elegant, argumentation, inviting us to rethink the lordship of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Christ in the historical form of what is routinely and mistakenly maligned as Christendom. While this is not the place to summarize O'Donovan's project, the mandate of this journal and my own work are in strong sympathy with O'Donovan's invitation to rethink Augustine's two cities, based on two loves, for our time. The promise to Israel and the coming of the Kingdom in Jesus Christ are emphatically public claims, and the efforts of political modernity to relegate that claim to the sphere of the private and "religious" must be sharply challenged. Christian fidelity relentlessly contends against what has been called the naked public square. To this end, says O'Donovan, the state must be kept "humble" and "minimally coercive," as befits the "desacralization of politics." These and other arguments pressed by O'Donovan are consonant with the tradition of political liberalism that carefully distinguishes between state and society, with both under the lordship of Christ. Liberal democracy, like all politics, is prone to the temptations of self-aggrandizement, indeed of self-sacralization, which is idolatry. Against such temptations, and in order to propose a more excellent way, the Church faithfully contends, until that time when, in the words of St. Paul, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess the lordship of Jesus Christ, who is "the desire of the nations."

The First Political Task

In 1981, I wrote the founding statement of the Institute on Religion and Democracy. That statement, "Christianity and Democracy," has been often reprinted and its opening lines are responsive to the claims of Daniel Bell's proposed typology of political theologies. The statement begins with this:

> Jesus Christ is Lord. That is the first and final assertion Christians make about all of reality, including politics. Believers now assert by faith what one day will be manifest to the sight of all: every earthly sovereignty is subordinate to the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. The Church is the bearer of that claim. Because the Church is pledged to the Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus, it must maintain a critical distance from all the kingdoms of the world, whether actual or proposed. Christians betray their Lord if, in theory or practice, they equate the Kingdom of God with any political, social, or economic order of this passing time. At best, such orders permit the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom and approximate, in small part, the freedom, peace, and justice for which we hope.

The statement then goes on to affirm that the first political task of the Church is to be the Church, and to suggest what that might mean for the right ordering of the *saeculum*, the politics of the present time. Although it was written during the Cold War and was in large part a defense of liberal democracy against the communist totalitarianism of the time, there is little in the argument of "Christianity and Democracy" that I would now change. Daniel Bell and others may view the statement as an exercise in "statecraft," an instance of letting the world define the terms of politics, of subordinating the "master discourse" of the gospel to "the principalities and powers of the present time." The same charge is made against the other two parties of what Bell calls the dominant tradition: the political theology of Metz, et al., and the liberationist theology of Gutierrez, et al. As unsympathetic as I am to the leftist and frequently Marxist presuppositions of those two parties, they have not, I think, abandoned the lordship of Christ or the priority of allegiance to the society that is the Church. What Bell condemns as engaging in "statecraft" is no more than accepting one's placement in a particular moment of history and making a decision for political possibilities most approximately congruent with, or least in conflict with, the lordship of Christ. For the ministry of the Church, moreover, this is also a pastoral responsibility in providing support and guidance for her members who are, as is frequently the case, in positions of political responsibility. In making such decisions, one is ever aware that all politics, indeed all history, is encompassed in the certain but not always evident course of the coming of the Kingdom of God. The coming of the Kingdom is, in Robert Jenson's fine phrase, "the story of the world."

The final question, writes Bell, is: "What is the proper political correlate of the Christian *mythos*? Leviathan or the Body of Christ?" That is, I suggest, an unfortunate muddling of the matter. As St. Augustine understood, the Church is not a political correlate of the gospel but a distinct society that is integral to the gospel. The political correlate is the politics by which the Church is confronted in the course of her sojourn through history. As for Bell's three champions of the emergent tradition, neither Stanley Hauerwas nor John Milbank has or envisions an empirical Church capable of constituting a polity in critical distinction from the polities of the world. Moreover, Hauerwas' absolute pacifism precludes—his protestations to the contrary notwithstanding—his effective engagement in the moral deliberation about the use of coercion, which is an inescapable component of all earthly polities. Milbank's political proposals, as distinct from his interesting theoretical and rhetorical contributions, are little more than a grab bag of prejudices, usually of a conventionally leftist sort. By way of sharpest contrast,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and despite differences we may have in specific political or ecclesial judgments, Oliver O'Donovan is clearly in the tradition of Augustine, exploring in the midst of the turbulences of history the relationship between the City of God and the city of man most approximately faithful to the sovereignty of Christ, in confident anticipation of the time when that sovereignty is no longer disputed.

Daniel Bell means no compliment when he says that I represent the dominant tradition. The fact is, however, that the exercise of what he pejoratively calls statecraft—and what Stanley Hauerwas, in a nicely honed but fatuous phrase, derides as "doing ethics for Caesar"—is a difficult and distinctly minority enterprise. The liberal democracy that one would defend is so very unsatisfactory. But it is the least unsatisfactory of options on offer. Everything short of the Kingdom is so painfully unsatisfactory. In the eucharistic canon we pray, "Strengthen in faith and love your pilgrim Church on earth." For those strengthened in faith and love, there is no alternative to that Church on pilgrimage, confusedly and ambiguously engaged with the polities of the *saeculum,* while, all along the way, celebrating the Real Presence of that city whose temple, according to Revelation 21, is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, and through whose gates shall be brought the glory and the honor of the nations. That is the political theology entailed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Christian history and among Christian thinkers today, that theology is sometimes emergent, frequently obscured, but never securely dominant. Short of the Kingdom, there is and will be too much in the world that contradicts the story of the world. The truth of the story will be vindicated beyond doubt or dispute only in retrospect of the final fulfillment of the promise that it proclaims.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ 'Tis the season to once again complain about the season. There is something to be said for classy complaining such as Dell deChant of the University of South Florida provides in "The Economy as Religion: The Dynamics of Consumer Culture." For instance, there is this: "Santa is not the embodiment of secular commercialism. He is the embodiment of our culture's greatest religious myth: the myth of success and affluence, right engagement with the economy, and the acquisition and consumption of images and objects. Santa is the incarnation of this myth. For this very reason he functions as a profoundly religious figure in our postmodern cosmological culture. This reason may also account for his seeming immunity to criticism from a religion still following the cultural logic of a previous time. In short, Santa is not secular. He is sacred. To attack him as secular is to attack his shadow." It is not only Christmas, says deChant. There is also Easter, Valentine's Day, Halloween, the Fourth of July, the Super Bowl, and, if the designation catches on, September 11 as Patriot Day. All are intensely sacred events, we are told. "As such they reveal not only how thoroughly religious postmodern American culture has become but also just how difficult it may be for Americans to cease being the consumers the Economy demands that they be." The postmodernist flourishes notwithstanding, deChant's article is a pretty conventional jeremiad against "consumerism." There is an important element of truth in such complaints, of course, but they always strike me as being a bit Scrooge-ish. And a bit condescending toward ordinary folk who, we are told, are dumb enough to believe every advertisement. Dr. Johnson observed that a man is seldom so innocently employed as when he is busy making money. And more or less the same obtains with the spending of money, at least when one is spending it on gifts for others. I rather doubt that Santa is the sacred figure deChant claims he is. His cult claims no martyrs. Not that lives are not ruined by excessive consumption, but nobody dies in its name. That being said, it is reassuring that every December the cry is heard in every corner of the land that we have lost the true meaning of Christmas, from which one may infer that the true meaning of Christmas is far from lost. It will be time to really worry when the cry is no longer heard.

■ Yes, yes, we know, although we thank you for bringing it our attention. The spine of the October issue read "Octobeer 2004." As in Oktoberfest? The covers were all printed before the mistake was caught and to correct it would have cost thousands of dollars and a delay in getting the issue into the mail, so we let it be. Speculation that the misprint reflected the German extraction of persons associated with FT is entirely unfounded. There was, however, among copy editors desperate to make light of their egregious oversight, some discussion of making "Octobeer" an annual tradition. Be assured that the idea has been nipped in the Bud.

■ A publication of the British Jesuits, *Letters and Notices*, quotes approvingly from the obituary of Cyril Barrett, S.J. that appeared in the London *Times*: "Like many Jesuits down the ages Barrett made no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

attempt to disguise his chafing at the Vatican's hierarchical politics and social conservatism—going so far as to declare on the day of the attempted assassination of the Pope, in a bellow that filled a London restaurant, that 'the only thing wrong with that bloody Turk was that he couldn't shoot straight.' Yet he could readily assume his priestly guise and, in that capacity, was a compassionate and subtle counselor and eminently practical moralist, ultimately convinced of the intelligence as well as the goodness of the Holy Spirit and able to instill that belief in others." The use of "disguise" and "guise" is of interest, the latter now suggesting "semblance" or "pretext." One has to wonder who is meant by those "many Jesuits down the ages." Surely not the English martyrs of the Society of Jesus who were killed as "papists" and on the gallows prayed for their executioners. One expects they may be surprised at a Jesuit in a London restaurant bellowing his approval of killing the Pope. On the other hand, it was generous of Father Barrett to allow that the Holy Spirit is intelligent and good. The Jesuits are notorious for their high standards.

■ He is by no means the first person to say it, but people pay most particular attention when Bernard Lewis speaks about Islam and the West. In an interview with *Die Welt*, he was asked whether the European Union (EU) could be a counterforce to the hegemony of the United States. He answered with a simple "No." Pressed on the point, he observed that only three countries pose a potential challenge to the U.S.: China, India, and a restored Russia. By the end of the century, if not before, he said, "Europe will be part of the Arabic West, of the Maghreb." Bat Y'eor, an Egyptian-French scholar of Islam, has been making this argument for years and has a new book coming out on what she calls "Eurabia." But Lewis carries more weight in academic and diplomatic circles, and his saying it has given prominent European politicians a permission slip to speak more candidly about a subject previously addressed in public only by those dismissed as extremists. For instance, Frits Bolkestein of the Netherlands, a former EU commissioner, has said, "Current trends allow only one conclusion: the U.S. will remain the only superpower; China is becoming an economic giant; Europe is being Islamicized." If Lewis is right, said Bokestein, "the liberation of Vienna in 1683 will have been in vain." In 1683, it will be recalled, the West, led by Polish forces, turned back the Turks at the gates of Vienna. Absent that victory, Europe might very well have become an Islamic culture. In view of the birth dearth among Europeans and the swelling number of unassimilated and vigorously reproductive Muslim immigrants, the reconquest of Europe by Islam may be well underway. It is estimated that within a decade several major cities of Europe will be majority Muslim. All this gives new urgency to the question of Turkey's admission to the EU. For reasons that I do not fully understand, the U.S. has been strongly supportive of Turkey's application for membership, which EU officialdom has now agreed to negotiate over the next several years. The vestigial national parliaments in the EU have been vocally skeptical about admitting Turkey, and popular opinion is generally opposed. But national parliaments and popular opinion are increasingly trumped by EU administrators. Presently counting seventy million people, Turkey would become the largest country in the EU, and it is, of course, almost totally Muslim. If Turkey is admitted, one might ask, why not countries that are culturally more European, such as Ukraine and Belarus, or even Russia itself? An argument for admitting Turkey is that it represents, under its military guardians, a more moderate form of Islam and would serve as a buffer against or bridge to (take your choice) the larger Muslim world. The proponents of Turkey's admission seem to have implicitly accepted the prospect of Eurabia, the only question being what kind of Islam will dominate Europe. Despite America's unrivalled global power, it is too easy for Americans to think we live in splendid isolation, aloof from the momentous religious, cultural, and political reconfigurations of our time. But one cannot help but believe that the reversal, more than three hundred years later, of the victory of Vienna would be very bad for Europe, for America, and for the world.

■ In my critical but sympathetic discussion of Samuel Huntington's new book, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* ("To Be American," FT August/September), I suggested that his argument would be derided and dismissed by many as a revival of "nativism." (A charge that Huntington should have more adroitly anticipated.) Sure enough, the *New Republic* has Paul Starr of Princeton do a long hatchet job under the title "The Return of the Nativist." Starr is most particularly exercised by the claim that America is in any serious sense a Christian society, and he is totally unimpressed by the argument that the culture is falling apart. He writes, "And America's cultural integrity is scarcely in jeopardy. From one end of the country to the other, Americans shop at the same stores, listen to the same music, follow the same sports, read about and watch the same celebrities—and largely honor the same ideals." Well, that is a relief. *E pluribus unum*, thanks to Oprah, Wal-Mart, hip-hop, and Donald Trump. As to the same ideals, what Justice Scalia calls the "sweet mystery of life" passage in recent

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Supreme Court decisions, constitutionalizing the sovereignty of the unbridled individual will with respect to abortion and sodomy, is not what Huntington has in mind when he speaks of the "core culture" bequeathed us by the first settlers and the founders of the Republic. In the same issue of TNR there is, by way of contrast, a second discussion of Huntington's book by Enrique Krauze, editor of *Letras Libres*, written "in defense of Mexican-Americans," to whom, I agree, Huntington is less than fair. Krauze argues that, while there are also significant differences, Mexican immigration is more like than unlike great immigration flows of the past. "'Mexico' does not stand for a fundamentalist religion. 'Mexicans' are not a group of racialist or nationalist militants. California is not Bosnia. Mexican culture is not a threat to American culture. Mexicans will seek to become part of American culture (and American cultures: Korean, African, European, South American, Jewish, Anglo-Saxon), and to assimilate in the essential areas: language, business, politics, respect for the law, and, in the middle term, marriage. They will certainly maintain their differences in other areas: they will stick to their families, if they can bring them; they will opt for citizenship, if they are allowed; they will miss the land they came from for a generation or two; they will cling quite wisely to their cuisine; they will continue to be Catholics and to celebrate the holidays of the civic and religious calendar. They will be like and unlike their fellow citizens. They will show that one can live a richer life with multiple identities, and in this way they will contribute to new cultural models. So what's the problem? France and Germany can only dream of such immigrants." A neglected factor in this debate that was underscored by Philip Jenkins in these pages ("A New Religious America," FT August/September 2002), and a factor that I suppose would only further disturb Paul Starr, is that immigration from Latin America, and Mexico in particular, will have the effect of reinforcing the social and cultural reality of "Christian America." For all the scores on which it can be fairly faulted, Huntington's book is helping to mainstream an argument that should be in the mainstream. For any society, asking "Who Are We?" can be an indication of cultural vitality. It is a question that should not be left to the xenophobic denizens of the intellectual fever swamps.

■ I haven't seen all the reviews but have the impression that Mario Cuomo's book *Why Lincoln Matters: Today More Than Ever* is being almost unanimously panned, with criticism divided between the former New York governor's risible ignorance of Lincoln scholarship and his forced recruitment of Lincoln to today's Democratic Party. Not, however, in *Commonweal*, where Alan Wolfe of Boston College effusively praises the book and its author. It is really two books, he writes. "The one that appreciates Lincoln is as good as the one that lambasts Bush." As for the author, Wolfe writes that we should be grateful for anything that comes "from a man as admirable and thoughtful as this one." Then there is the final pitch: "Lincoln matters to us, among other reasons, because he matters to Mario Cuomo, and we should be indebted to the governor for bringing him once again to our attention." Ah yes, Lincoln. We had almost forgotten him. Thank you, Governor, for bringing him once again to our attention. And, by the way, a nice job on Bush. But then, we expect nothing less from a man as admirable and thoughtful as you.

■ "According to Webster's," some opponents of same-sex marriage like to say, "marriage is 'the state of, or relation between, a man and a woman who have become husband wife.'" Not any more. The eleventh edition of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, as well as the American Heritage Dictionary and the Oxford English Dictionary, all now include a union between two persons of the same sex under the definition of marriage. And, in a few years, there will likely be an allowance for "two or more." Arthur Bicknell of Merriam-Webster says they don't take sides on controverted questions. "Our primary job as lexicographers is to create a painstakingly accurate and comprehensive record of the English language." In other words, their job is description, not prescription, and there is an argument to be made for that. The more important point is that defenders of marriage need to appeal to a higher authority than Webster's, such as natural law, clear reason, the common good, and—dare one say it?—the Word of God.

■ As Polonius said, "To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." It is commonly forgotten that Shakespeare portrays Polonius as the fool of *Hamlet*. The Bishop of Memphis, J. Terry Steib, addresses the abortion and Communion question and starts off on a fairly firm footing. "I believe that the Church is a hospital for sinners; it is not a museum of saints." (Although I don't know why we should think of the saints being in a museum.) He goes on to say that in receiving the Eucharist "none of us is worthy of so great a gift. This is why we pray: 'Oh Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.'" But finally, says the bishop, it is a matter of conscience. "When individuals try to make up their mind about

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a moral dilemma, they consult their own inner being, their families, their colleagues. If they are Christians, they will wisely look to see what theologians have said about the issue. They will consult the Scriptures. When the person is Catholic, she or he must also pay attention to the teachings of the Church." "Consult" the Scriptures, "pay attention to" the Church. Nothing here about obedience to the truth, indeed nothing about truth. Nothing about the obligation to have a conscience rightly formed. Says the bishop, "The person chooses what is true to him or her self. And we are judged by God according to what is in our hearts." Just as St. Polonius said. There is more: "The person asking for the Eucharist is following his/her conscience and that conscience tells each that he/she is worthy to receive the sign of our union with Christ." So now it is "Oh Lord, I am worthy to receive you"? The bishop is to be commended for trying to address a difficult question, but the result is sadly muddled and would seem to directly contradict the statement of the bishops last June, "Catholics in Political Life." Bishop Steib writes, "Our role as Catholics is to be as deeply involved in our society as possible so that we can be leaven to that society, so that we can add to the common good." But what if the leaven has gone flat, and the hospital offers no remedy but only the lie that the desperately ill patient is just fine?

■ "The Pledge of Allegiance and the Limited State" is a judicially, historically, and theologically informed essay by law professor Thomas Berg of St. Thomas University, Houston, in the *Texas Review of Law & Politics*. He writes, "'Under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance is a means for the state to declare that it is a limited institution that is subject to, and does not interfere with, higher commitments and norms. In a religiously pluralistic society, however, 'under God' is an imperfect way of making that declaration. But if 'under God' is removed from the Pledge, the state must . . . make other efforts to declare and respect its own limits." The "other effort" that Berg chiefly discusses is school vouchers, which would permit parents to choose, with government financial support, the schools they want their children to attend. That is, of course, a very good idea and is, at least in principle, permissible under the Supreme Court's *Zelman* decision of 2002. While it is true that the Pledge question, like most cases in church-state jurisprudence, is related to the government school monopoly on public funding, even if or when that monopoly is decisively broken the need for the state to declare its limited nature would remain. And it seems that one good, albeit imperfect, way of meeting that need in terms of symbolic public action is the simple saying of the words "one nation under God." Another good way would be for all schools to teach that the truths of the Declaration of Independence are still in force.

■ You can bank on it: when the party of change succeeds and becomes the establishment enforcing its rigorous rule, what had been the party of reaction to change will become the party of change, urging flexibility. A case in point: although the Second Vatican Council did not mandate it, the liturgical establishment, composed of certified academic liturgists who play hardball, was adamant in insisting that the rules required that priests celebrate Mass *versus populum*, facing the people. The old way, now scorned as the priest "turning his back on the people," was traditionally called *ad orientem*, priest and people together facing East. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger has been sympathetic to the old way and, in an introduction to a new book on liturgy, he comments on a clarification issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship which underscores that *versus populum* is not mandatory: "This is an important clarification. It sheds light on what is relative in the external symbolic forms of the liturgy and resists the fanaticisms that, unfortunately, have not been uncommon in the controversies of the last forty years. At the same time it highlights the internal direction of liturgical action, which can never be expressed in its totality by external forms. This internal direction is the same for priest and people, towards the Lord—towards the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Congregation's response should thus make for a new, more relaxed discussion, in which we can search for the best ways of putting into practice the mystery of salvation. The quest is to be achieved not by condemning one another, but by carefully listening to each other and, even more importantly, listening to the internal guidance of the liturgy itself. The labeling of positions as 'preconciliar,' 'reactionary,' and 'conservative,' or as 'progressive' and 'alien to the faith' achieves nothing; what is needed is a new mutual openness in the search for the best realization of the memorial of Christ." Against the rigorists, I am inclined to agree with Cardinal Ratzinger that a measure of flexibility and openness is in order.

■ "None of this is by accident. For a couple of decades now, there has been a systematic attempt to dilute the sacred message of Christmas while elevating the prominence of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa (the latter a recent secular invention)." Conspiracy theory, anyone? The quote is from a Catholic League press release reporting on their careful counting of the seasonal

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cards produced by the major greeting card companies. There were 443 Christmas cards, with only nine featuring the religious significance of Christmas. That's two percent. Of the thirty-three Hanukkah cards, twenty-six, or 79 percent, feature a Star of David or Menorah. The Kwanzaa cards are all areligiously ethnic. In the Christmas cards department, there is also a "Risqué" line and a "Rude" line on offer. These feature, inter alia, S&M gear and a near-naked female angel asking, "Ever make an angel in the snow?" You get the idea. There are no "Rude" or "Risqué" Hanukkah or Kwanzaa cards. It is not plausible that this circumstance reflects simply a business decision on the part of the card companies. In a country where nearly 90 percent of the people claim to be Christian and, curiously enough, even more say that Jesus was born of a virgin, the predominance of "Christmas" cards mocking or blaspheming the meaning of the day—or simply ignoring it—cannot be explained by market dynamics. I don't know if conspiracy is the right word. Conspiracy implies a measure of collusion. Maybe the major greeting card companies, for some unknown reason, employ an inordinate number of people who are Christophobes, people who have hatred or contempt for Christ and Christianity. I am open to more convincing explanations.

■ It is as it was. It had been years since I last read J. F. Powers' *Morte D'Urban*. Published in 1956, it is critically acclaimed for its delicate evocation of the everyday "feel" of American Catholicism prior to Vatican II. On an impulse, I took the dog-eared paperback on a flight to New Orleans. More than I had expected, it is as it was. Father Urban, the traveling star of a fictional Order of St. Clement, finds himself in the unaccustomed position of running a parish in Minnesota.

> Father Urban was familiar with the classic view of the parish as a natural unit of society, second in importance only to the family, but he had seldom found this view held by clergy and laity in the same parish. If the pastor tried to get his people to think of themselves not as Jaycees or trade unionists, not as Republicans or Democrats, but primarily as parishioners, the chances were they'd resist him, and Father Urban didn't really blame them. Such a thesis made small appeal to anybody who'd arrived at a greater, or clearer, station in life than that commonly designated by the term parishioner—and who hadn't? If, on the other hand, the people tried to raise the status of parishioners, the chances were their pastor would resist *them*—and wisely—for wherever you found people trying to make a lot of their parishionership, you'd find agitators at work. Invariably they were the products of higher Catholic education, or converts, whose real object was to assume unto themselves all but the strictly sacerdotal activity and to see that *this* was in accord with their understanding of it and the latest word from Rome. They'd had a field day under Pius XII.

After the Council, the field day became a permanent picnic of everybody getting in on the priestly action, with parishes declaring themselves to be "prophetic communities" and everyone designated a minister. Even the ushers are now "ministers of hospitality." It is no longer sufficient to attend Mass. "You *vill* participate—fully, actively, and enthusiastically." Pity the poor soul who shows up just to be quietly touched by grace. At a recent Mass in a fair-sized parish, the pastor proudly announced that the parish had 247 volunteers and to them he declared, "You are all ministers. You are what this parish is about. You make this community happen." And here I thought it had something to do with the Real Presence of Jesus. Don't get me wrong; parishes do need volunteers, and lots of them. But lending a hand does not require "trying to make a lot of their parishionership" by ratcheting up the status of helping out by turning it into a quasi-ordained junior "ministry." J. F. Powers is right: that approach has little appeal for anybody who has "arrived at a greater, or clearer, station in life." It is in that station in life that one is called to holiness. Parochial dignities and influence are no substitute for discipleship in the world. God bless all 247 parish volunteers. I don't know what we would do without them, or at least a good many of them. But, with respect, they do not make the Church happen. Christ does that when, through the apostolic ministry he instituted, he gathers two or three in his name to "do this" in remembrance of him. Now, however, I may have given the impression that *Morte D'Urban* is a critique of Catholic foibles. It is also that, in passing. But mainly it is a poignantly funny story about the oddities and glories of The Catholic Thing in the 1950s and, for the most part, today. It is very much worth reading and, as I discovered on my way to New Orleans, very much worth rereading.

■ As the Anglican communion appears to be on the verge of breaking up, wise men and women of the Church of England are unflagging in the cause of reform. The General Synod meeting in London has agreed to more prayer book revisions, including dropping any reference to the three wise men who visited the baby Jesus. They will now be referred to simply as Magi. The committee submitting the change said,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"While it seems very unlikely that these Persian court officials were female, the possibility that one or more of the Magi were female cannot be excluded completely. . . . The visitors were not necessarily wise and not necessarily men." This was presumably a pastoral response to people suffering a crisis of faith over the matter. On the grounds that the unlikely cannot be excluded completely, some years ago the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine here in New York put up "Christa," a crucifix bearing an unbared woman. Despite rumored threats of its imminent dissolution, the progress of the Church of It Ain't Necessarily So continues apace.

■ As this goes to the printer, the report of the Eames Commission, called the Windsor Report, has been released. Addressing the crisis created in the Anglican communion by the consecration as bishop of a New Hampshire man who left his wife and children to live with his male partner, the Windsor Report, to judge by initial responses, seems unlikely to satisfy any of the several sides in this controversy. We hope to have a more detailed evaluation in the next issue.

■ Holiday greetings or Christmas greetings? Every year about this time, the arguments begin anew. William Devlin, the founder of the Urban Family Council in Philadelphia, has come up with a notice that might be posted in public places in order to preempt the contentious and litigious: "Legal Disclaimer: 'Merry Christmas' (hereafter 'The Greeting') . . . this announcement is not intended to offend, alienate, foster hate, or be a precursor for any egregious acts (legal or illegal), thoughts, words, or deeds. 'The Greeting' is made only in the context in which it may be legally received, if in fact, it is received at all. It is not intended to be nor should it be, in any way, connected to any other type of greeting, real or imagined, past, present or future. No references to any persons, things, or substances, animate or inanimate, real, fictional, or otherwise should be assumed by the reader or receiver of the greeting (hereafter, 'the greetee'). The greeting is not being made to (nor will tenders be accepted from or on behalf of) nonbelievers in 'The Greeting' in any jurisdiction in which making and/or accepting the greeting would violate that jurisdiction's laws or feelings (also refer to local statutes and ordinances related to 'The Greeting'). In any jurisdiction in which perceived 'greeting' is not welcomed nor agreed upon by all 'greetees,' then the 'greetor' of 'The Greeting' will be held harmless in this life and the next, including all issuing posterity both now and forever. 'The Greeting' may be made by a licensed 'greetor' and any liability assumed or created by the 'greetee' shall be the sole responsibility of said 'greetor.' If you have been aggrieved, offended, waylaid, parlayed, filleted, or delayed in any way, either real, imagined, or perceived by said 'Greeting' and/or by 'greetor' as the result of receiving said 'greeting' you can call toll free 1-800-CHRISTMAS to speak with legal counsel."

■ Although she once attended one and, later, would occasionally accept the hospitality of others, Flannery O'Connor took a distinctly dim view of creative writing schools. The problem, she said, is that they encouraged writing by people who should be strongly discouraged. The hundreds upon hundreds of books for review incessantly pouring into this office cannot help but create, at least at times, a measure of sympathy for O'Connor's view of people who should not be encouraged to write. And yet, what we persist in thinking of as the intellectual conversation cannot continue without the making of books; and what the Preacher viewed with despondency—the making of books without end—may also be viewed as an inevitability not untouched by hopefulness. Be that as it may, I generally try to encourage aspiring writers, unless their manifest unsuitability for the task defeats my most strenuous efforts to be charitable. A great difficulty experienced by many in writing a book or article is simply getting on with it. This is not so much writer's block as commonly understood; it is more a matter of the conscientious writer's awareness that he does not command all the material pertinent to the subject he wishes to address. In this connection, I have come across nothing wiser than Dr. Johnson's 1755 preface to volume one of his monumental dictionary. After discussing his original ambitions for the project, he writes:

> But these were the dreams of a poet doomed at last to wake a lexicographer. I soon found that it is too late to look for instruments, when the work calls for execution, and that whatever abilities I had brought to my task, with those I must finally perform it. To deliberate whenever I doubted, to enquire whenever I was ignorant, would have protracted the undertaking without end, and, perhaps, without much improvement; for I did not find by my first experiments that what I had not of my own was easily to be obtained: I saw that one enquiry only gave occasion to another, that book referred to book, that to search was not always to find, and to find was not always to be informed; and that thus to pursue perfection, was, like the first inhabitants of Arcadia, to chase the sun, which, when they had reached the hill where he seemed to rest, was still beheld at the same

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> distance from them. I then contracted my design, determining to confide in myself, and no longer to solicit auxiliaries, which produced more encumbrance than assistance; by this I obtained at least one advantage, that I set limits to my work, which would in time be ended, though not completed.

In sum, get on with it. Not all bad writers will become good writers by writing more. Many will only add to the already superabundant store of bad writing. But writers become writers by writing. And even the best, who will almost certainly fall short of the standard set by Dr. Johnson, can be emboldened by the certainty that their task will in time be ended, though not completed. In writing, as in every other human endeavor, completion is not our business.

■ The phenomenon of the growing number of meetings of ROFTERS (Readers of FIRST THINGS) is, well, phenomenal. Talking with people here and there, I gather that some meet in the evening and others on weekend afternoons, some at homes with potluck dinners or snacks and others at restaurants. In some meetings, the convener selects an article or two from the current issue for discussion, in others people volunteer to lead a discussion of particular articles, and in yet others it is a free-for-all left open to whatever in an issue people want to talk about. Wishy-washy latitudinarians that we are, the editors emphasize that each group is independent and works out whatever works best for participants. To see if there is a meeting near you that you might join, check out the website, *www.firstthings.com*. If you are interested in launching a group, write Erik Ross at *er@firstthings.com*.

■ We will be happy to send a sample issue of this journal to people who you think are likely subscribers. Please send names and addresses to First Things, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, New York 10010 (or e-mail to *subscriberservices@pma-inc.net*). On the other hand, if they're ready to subscribe, call toll free 1-877-905-9920, or visit *www.firstthings.com*.

Sources: WHILE WE'RE AT IT: Santa as Symbol, *Civic Arts Review*, Summer-Fall 2003. Anti-papal Jesuit, *Letters and Notices*, Spring 2004. Islamic Europe, drawn in part from a report by Christopher Caldwell, *Weekly Standard*, October 4, 2004. Paul Starr on Huntington, *New Republic*, June 21, 2004. The admirable Cuomo on Lincoln and Bush, *Commonweal*, September 10, 2004. Webster on marriage, *Washington Times*, May 24, 2004. Berg on the Pledge of Allegiance, *Texas Review of Law & Politics*, Fall 2003. Anti-Christmas cards, Catholic League press release, December 11, 2003. Anglican wise men, Reuters, February 10, 2004.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What's a college education for? Maybe you've already been in school for thirteen years. Maybe you've already chosen something to specialize in. You stand at the brink of four more years of schooling and thousands more spent on tuition. But do you even know what "education" means? You're on track to be specialized, but have you ever studied the basics of what it is to be human? Have you given the true liberal arts education a try? In other words, have you ever met Homer on his own terms? Read Aristotle's *Ethics*, or Machiavelli's *The Prince*? Understood how Aquinas, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche affect our times? Spent hours over a poem by Keats? Entering into these texts means entering into life. **What makes this college different?** Here at Thomas More College we don't read books or poems because they are historically significant or entertaining—we read them because they contain deep insights, and because they are often beautiful beyond compare. When a student gives himself over to these ageless works he comes out feeling that something real has taken place by the end of it, gradually, without his knowing it, just by being next to something huge all around, something mysterious and always new. Call it "tradition." Call it "truth." / A liberal arts education depends upon its breadth and openness of stance: the more great works we read the better. This is because these works speak to each other across the centuries, telling us more about the whole. We **read hundreds of great works** at Thomas More College (more perhaps than any other college) in order to grasp this whole picture. Furthermore, understanding the community of tradition requires that we also *be* in community ourselves. Thomas More College remains deliberately small. Freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors come together every morning to take the same **Humanities class** and encounter the same works. All sophomores spend their spring semester living and studying in **Rome**. Thomas More College wholeheartedly accepts the **Catholic vision**. In keeping with this vision, students of all faiths are welcome.

THE
Thomas More College of Liberal Arts

MERRIMACK, NH • ROME, ITALY

1-800-880-8308 | www.thomasmorecollege.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY PRESS

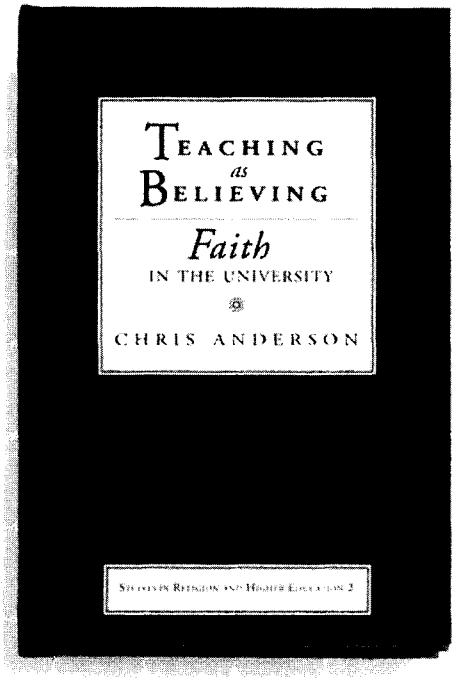
Teaching as Believing

Faith in the University

Studies in Religion and Higher Education 2

CHRIS ANDERSON

Professor of English at Oregon State University



ISBN 1-932792-03-1 | $24.95
6 x 9, 244 pages | Paper

A BOLD CELEBRATION OF FAITH AND REASON IN THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

Teaching as Believing addresses the issue of spirituality head on by carefully exploring how a professor of faith can help a public university accomplish its pluralistic mission to educate the whole person. Anderson gives readers a book that is as much about the experience of a faithful teacher and the proper ends of education as it is about discovering the right ways to read texts — be they sacred or secular.

An extraordinary book…a seamless weave of intellect and love that honors the highest standards of the academic vocation and the deepest needs of the human heart

– PARKER J. PALMER
author of *The Courage to Teach* and *Let Your Life Speak*

baylorpress.com | 1.800.710.3217

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED